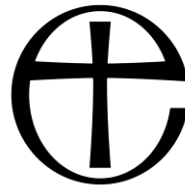


The **Methodist** Church



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Quality in Formation Panel

Review Report

The Queen's Foundation

April 2014

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GLOSSARY

ABTAPL	Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries
BCP	Book of Common Prayer
DDO	Diocesan Director of Ordinands
EU	European Union
FUA	Free University of Amsterdam
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LFA	Learning and Foundation Agreement
Moodle	On-line learning platform
OLM	Ordained Local Ministry
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
QCC	Queen's Connexional Course
RTP	Regional Training Partnership
SMART	Specific; Measurable; Attainable; Realistic; Timely
SOCMS	Selly Oak Centre for Mission Studies
TEI	Theological Educational Institution
UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency
URC	United Reformed Church
USPG	United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (now Anglicans in World Mission)
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WEMTC	West of England Ministerial Training Course

LIST OF REVIEWERS

The Revd Canon Dr Robert Reiss (Senior Church of England Reviewer), Canon Emeritus of Westminster.

The Revd Chris Batten (Senior Methodist Reviewer), Supernumerary Methodist Minister in Milton Keynes United Area, formerly Academic Registrar of the Open University.

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The Revd Dr Mathew Philip, Non-stipendiary Minister Diocese of Chichester, Associate Dean, London Metropolitan University.

Alison Shacklady, Reader, Diocese of Liverpool.

THE REVIEW FRAMEWORK

On behalf of the sponsoring churches, review teams are asked to assess the fitness for purpose of the training institution for preparing candidates for ordained and licensed ministry and to make recommendations for the enhancement of the life and work of the institution.

Within the structures of the Church of England, this report has been prepared for the House of Bishops acting through the Ministry Council. Within the structures of the Methodist Church the report has been prepared for the Methodist Council acting through the Ministries Committee.

In coming to their judgements, reviewers are asked to use the following outcomes with regard to the overall outcome and individual criteria:

Confidence

Overall outcome: a number of recommendations, none of which question the generally high standards found in the review.

Criteria level: aspects of an institution's life which show good or best practice.

Confidence with qualifications

Overall outcome: A number of recommendations, including one or more of substance that questions the generally acceptable standards found in the review and which can be rectified or substantially addressed by the institution in the coming 12 months.

Criteria level: aspects of an institution's life which show either (a) at least satisfactory practice but with some parts which are not satisfactory or (b) some unsatisfactory practice but where the institution has the capacity to address the issues within 12 months.

No confidence

Overall outcome: A number of recommendations, including one or more of substance which raise significant questions about the standards found in the review and the capacity of the institution to rectify or substantially address these in the coming 12 months.

Criteria level: aspects of an institution's life which show either (a) generally not satisfactory practice or (b) some unsatisfactory practice where it is not evident that the institution can rectify the issues within the coming 12 months.

REVIEW OF THE QUEEN'S FOUNDATION

April 2014

SUMMARY

Introduction

Queen's College was founded in the early part of the Nineteenth Century and has a long history of preparing candidates for various forms of ministry. In 1970 it became an Ecumenical College, preparing students both for the ministry of the Church of England and for the Methodist Church and, later, for the United Reformed Church. At the beginning of this Century it became the Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theology. Those interested in its history are directed to *The Latter Glory of this House; A History of two Christian Commonwealths in Modern Britain 1828 - 1980* by Andrew Chandler, published by Darton, Longman & Todd in 2013. Aspects of its more recent history are discussed in the main report.

The current student body is larger and more dispersed than ever. Around 90 students are present on the campus during the week; another 50 have regular presence at evenings and weekends; another 20 are regularly there just for weekends; and another 40 -50 students have all or most of their learning at Shallowford House. This diversity and its implications are outlined more fully in the main report.

Summary of outcomes

CRITERIA	OUTCOME
A. Aims, objectives and evaluation of the institution	Confidence
B. Relationships with other institutions	Confidence
C. Curriculum for formation and education	Confidence
D. Community and corporate life	Confidence
E. Worship and training in public worship	Confidence
F. Ministerial, personal and spiritual formation	Confidence
G. Teaching and learning: content, method and	Confidence
H. Practical and pastoral theology	Confidence
I. Teaching staff	Confidence
J. All staff	Confidence
K. Students	Confidence
L. Governance, management, constitution and organisation	Confidence
M. Business planning and risk management	Confidence with Qualifications
N. Financial policies and cost-effectiveness	Confidence with Qualifications

O. Reserves policy and statutory liabilities	Confidence
P. Accommodation	Confidence
Overall Outcome	Confidence

General observations

Our overall conclusion is that we have Confidence in the Queen's Foundation for preparing students for various forms of authorised ministry.

Strengths

Among the many strengths we note in the main report we identify four in particular.

- Its ecumenical nature. By preparing for both Anglican and Methodist ministries it gives all its students a natural awareness of ecumenical possibilities for the future.
- In addition to students studying for authorised ministry there are a number of independent students, including some from largely black-led Pentecostal Churches, others from across the world church studying for Master's Degrees, and yet others studying for PhDs. This diversity of students makes Queen's a vibrant learning institution.
- The breadth of the backgrounds and convictions of both staff and students means that it is no sense a 'party' college. Almost all traditions are represented and it builds a natural tolerance of other points of view that we believe will be of great value in subsequent ministries.
- We observed much high quality teaching delivered in a variety of ways from what is obviously a very gifted staff team.

Areas for attention

- Relating to two churches and a variety of universities and secular agencies puts considerable pressure on the staff, particularly the administrative staff.
- Although not directly related to preparing candidates for ministry the presence of those from the wider world church, reflecting the inheritance of the Selly Oak Centre for Mission Studies, adds a very positive quality to the experience of studying at Queen's. We share the senior staffs' concern at how that inheritance can be retained financially.

The Report is written in relation to the Criteria set out in the *Inspection, Curriculum Approval, Moderation*, Handbook June 2012. The paragraphs follow the Criteria which are printed in *italic* type. The reviewers' comments are in normal type and the recommendations in **bold**.

FULL REPORT

1. The Queen's Foundation, Birmingham, is a complex institution. It is ecumenical in preparing both Methodist and Anglican students for authorized ministries, but also has a number of independent students, mainly but not exclusively from black-led Pentecostal churches. There is also an MA course, on which one third of the students are from overseas, and there are a number of research students linked to Queen's pursuing PhDs.

2. This Review was a joint Anglican/Methodist review of the arrangements for preparing candidates for recognized ministries, although a proper understanding of the nature of the Foundation means we refer in passing to other aspects of the Foundation's work. Both senior inspectors met with Queen's Leadership Team on 22nd November and one senior inspector attended the Academic Board on February 11th. The Anglican reviewers were present in Queen's from 6th to 8th March, the whole review team in Queen's, from 9th to 13th March, the Methodist reviewers in Queen's from 21st to 23rd March for the Queen's Regional Course and the Queen's Connexional Course and the Anglicans at Shallowford House also from 21st to 23rd March for the Lichfield Readers Course (Year 2). Throughout the review the staff and students were universally welcoming, friendly and hospitable and we must record our gratitude to all of them for the helpfulness they showed to us and for the staff's efficient management of the arrangements which enabled the review to be conducted with ease.

3. The different groups pursuing courses leading to authorized ministry are:-

- Track 1 candidates for Anglican stipendiary ministry and Methodist students training full time for the Diaconal Ministry and for the Presbyteral Ministry. They train together on the weekday course.
- Track 2 Anglican candidates, including Non-Stipendiary Ministry and Ordained Local Ministry (OLM), training part-time. The course meets at six weekends during the year in Queen's but ordinands also attend a weekday evening either in Queen's at courses together with the full time students, or, for those from the Diocese of Lichfield, at Shallowford House.
- Track 2 Methodist students for Presbyteral and Diaconal Ministry who train part-time on the new national Queen's Connexional Course (QCC) and attend six weekends at Queen's but also attend small local groups on Regional Group Study Days.
- Anglican candidates for Reader Ministry from Lichfield Diocese, who meet three weekends a year in Shallowford House and for an evening a week either in Shallowford House or in Queens with other candidates for ministry.
- Queen's has recently been appointed the institution to train Worcester candidates for Reader Ministry, which course started in its new form this academic year. They meet for weekends at Holland House, the Worcester Diocesan Retreat House, and one evening a week at Queen's.

4. This, together with a number of independent, exchange and research students (many from overseas) makes for a large student body with a varied pattern of pathways, yet it was clear to us that this whole body, including those not engaged

specifically in ministerial formation, formed a cohesive and mutually supportive group. Students spoke of the stimulation they found through being part of such a diverse community. From Queen's point of view it also produces a complex logistical exercise in coping with a variety of pathways to authorized ministry, although the Foundation appears to us to cope with it remarkably well.

5. At this point we must also note one other overall impression. The last six years have been a turbulent time for theological education and there have also been constant changes in the relationship with the churches and other church based institutions. During that period there have been four major church reviews: two by the Methodist Church, one by the URC and one by the Church of England.

6. In 2006/7 the Methodist Church undertook a major review of its theological provision, bringing to an end Foundation Training and deciding on the number of theological institutions needed. At the end of this review, the Methodist Church decided that Queen's, alongside Wesley House Cambridge and Wesley Study Centre in Durham should be used for full time theological education. At the same time strong encouragement was given to full time study through bursaries to build viable cohorts. The number of full time Methodist numbers in full time training increased, but the number of part-time Methodists on the Course declined rapidly.

7. In 2006 the URC reviewed its theological provision and decided not to send ministerial students to Queen's.

8. In 2007/8 the House of Bishops developed new policies relating to theological institutions, emphasizing the need for diversification to support viable and vibrant communities of learning and this included the benefits that could be gained from combining College and Course models.

9. In 2011 USPG reviewed its operations and decided to reduce its spending dramatically. This included a decision not to fund the Selly Oak Centre for Mission Studies (SOCMS) after 2012. In 2012 the Methodist Church also decided in the Fruitful Field process (see below) that SOCMS should be incorporated in the new Learning Network. So, in 2012, SOCMS ceased to exist and interim arrangements were put in place by the Methodist Church to support MA scholarship holders until the new Learning Network was established. New arrangements are not yet secure and Queen's governors are convinced that if this cannot be achieved there would be a significant impact on the vitality and quality of all learning and formation at Queen's.

10. In 2011 the Methodist Church reviewed the decisions it had taken in 2007 for its theological provision. After an extensive process of consultation the Fruitful Field report to Conference in 2012 once again named Queen's as its preferred choice of training institution, alongside Cliff College. Both were named as Centres in the national Learning Network. Conference accepted this recommendation and resolved to withdraw its activities from all other institutions that had been used to prepare student ministers. This radical proposal meant that in 2013 Queen's was allocated all newly accepted candidates for ordained ministry. From September 2013 Queen's has been responsible for all those Methodists entering pre-ordination training either full-time or part-time. The report promised significant increases in staffing and

financial resources to develop the facilities of both Centres to enable them to be excellent in their theological education, scholarship, research, hospitality and contribution to the learning of the whole people of God and this is now supported by a Memorandum of Understanding.

11. The Foundation's relationships with Universities over the last few years have been complex, as outlined in section B below, but one change should be noted at this point. The Church of England decided that the changes in Higher Education funding and the fragility of many University validation arrangements argued for a new 'common' validation and set of taught awards with Durham University. After a very successful validation visit, Queen's have just received confirmation that they will be validated for Common Awards from September 2014. The Methodist Church is a recognized partner within the overall agreement with Durham University.

12. There are also the QAA and UKBA/Home Office reviews outlined in paragraphs 33-34 below. We believe it is extremely important to reflect on this vast amount of largely uncoordinated external review. We are aware that there are two more reviews within a few months of this one and ultimately there will be another validation review when negotiations are concluded on a validating institution for research degrees this year. The Methodist Church is likely to seek a review of the Memorandum of Understanding before the next Churches' Review of Ministerial Formation. Quite rightly, in our view, the governors believe there is a need to consolidate the changes arising from the reviews that have already occurred, which are likely to take some years to work through and we shall comment further on the Business Plan in the section on governance. Having regard to the future pattern of institutional reviews, we feel that we must make a recommendation. This is no reflection at all on our confidence in Queen's; it is formulated to encourage the Principal and the Governors to seek to negotiate with the sponsoring churches and Durham University some consolidated planning of QAA, University, Church and internal reviews. In particular, the burden, cost and uncertainty generated by some of these external reviews over the last six years has not been proportionate to the benefits. We have not seen any evidence that these pressures have directly impacted on students, but we have seen evidence of unacceptable pressures on staff. They are to be highly congratulated on their protection of teaching and formation.

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the Principal and the Governors continue their discussions with Sponsoring Churches and with Durham University to investigate whether and when a move to a more coordinated pattern of annual and periodic institutional reviews would be practical, efficient and prudent.

SECTION ONE: AIMS AND KEY RELATIONS

A Aims and objectives

Reviewers will consider whether the institution's aims are appropriate, clearly articulated and understood.

A.i *Its aims, objectives and policies should be appropriate to the preparation of students for ordained/lay public ministry within the breadth of the traditions of the sponsoring churches.*

13. As recommended in the previous Inspection Report, The Queen's Foundation re-examined its aims with a view to shaping future developments and determined to adopt a vision that is dedicated to excellence in theological education and personal formation by:

- Nurturing and equipping Christians in their discipleship
- Preparing people for mission and ministry in lay and ordained roles
- Resourcing research that serves the mission of God in the world.

The institution's vision is to celebrate unity in diversity, in a community that is international, multi-cultural, and ecumenical. The aim is to enable Christians to deepen their spiritual life, to grow in a faith that is generous, enquiring, deeply rooted and creative in thought and practice, and to be passionate for God's work in God's world. The Governors believe that over the last seven years this statement has continued to capture the institution's ethos and values as its community learns, lives and worships together, which can be summarized as a deep desire not just to learn with one another but from one another. The differences of belief, tradition, culture, nationality, and ethnicity are seen as God's gift in and through which members of the community, individually and collectively, are brought to a wider and deeper knowledge and love of God.

14. The objectives are expressed as follows:

- To maintain and enhance wherever possible the ecumenical character and composition of the institution.
- To develop Queen's as a community of diversity and difference.
- To resource scholarship and research that serves the mission and ministry of the Churches.
- To work in partnerships that build capacity and quality in theological education.
- To provide high quality theological education for lay Christian disciples.
- To offer high quality theological education that is committed to the transformation of the world.
- To diversify the provision of theological education within a single organization and institution.

15. These objectives are worked out in various respects:

- Queen's is committed to practice and pioneer a model of the Covenant between the Church of England and the Methodist Church which commits them not just to working together but to growing into organic unity. The decision of the Methodist Church to choose Queen's as a Centre within its

Learning Network and to focus the training of all its student ministers with Queen's was done in part because of this proven commitment to ecumenical formation.

- Queen's develops diversity and difference as an international, ethnically diverse community. Over 6 years more than 50 MA scholars and more than 10 visiting post-doctoral scholars have studied and taught at Queen's. More than 20 mission partners have been prepared for overseas service. The presence and contribution each year of between 7 and 12 lay and ordained leaders each year from around the world has transformed the experience of those preparing for ordained ministry.
- The creation of the Centre for Black Ministries and Leadership in 2008 built on Queen's historic commitment to nurturing and fostering the gifts and ministries of Black and Asian Christians.
- Ecumenism is not just denominational. As a learning community Queen's goes beyond 'party'. This is of particular relevance to the Church of England. Queen's is not identified or affiliated with any 'party' or particular tradition within the Church, offering instead an hospitable and generous space where people of different convictions and experiences can learn from and with each other.

The review team is convinced that this international, multi-cultural and ecumenical community is a very rich and stimulating base for formation in mission and ministry.

16. To support its academic objectives the Graduate and Research Centre (established in 1999) recruits doctoral research students engaging in research in a wide range of subjects. The partnership with the University of Birmingham and latterly with the University of Gloucestershire has enabled Queen's staff to supervise PhD students and currently there are 29 students on doctoral programmes. The appointment of two half time Research Fellows and of more than 10 Honorary Research Scholars expresses this continuing commitment. This focus on research and scholarship feeds into the quality of teaching and formation.

17. By its objectives Queen's is committed to theological education that not only roots students in the study of scripture and the Christian tradition, but requires that their theology is engaged, contextual, and practical. The model of a single Foundation providing for initial and continuing formation in mission and ministry; theological education for lay Christian disciples and scholarly research has enabled Queen's to incorporate and develop a wide range of activities and funding streams. This has enabled the Foundation to grow significantly in size, both in terms of student and staff numbers, and has also enabled Queen's to respond creatively and flexibly to new challenges and opportunities. The review team is entirely satisfied that the aims and objectives adopted by Queen's are appropriate, clearly articulated and understood. In particular, these aims and objectives are entirely appropriate to the preparation of students for ordained/public ministry within (and across) the breadth of the traditions of the sponsoring churches.

A.ii *They should be consistent with the current published policy statements of the sponsoring churches.*

18. The review team have had access to the following Queen's Foundation policy documents:- Admissions, Appraisal and Peer Review for Staff, Attendance,

Communication, Complaints, Data Protection, Equality and Diversity (currently being revised), Harassment and Bullying, Health and Safety, Learning Support, Misconduct/Fitness to Practice, Plagiarism, Safeguarding (currently being revised) and Study leave. We have had access to a chart for Governors noting reviews and actions on policy revisions. We have also had access to Academic Handbooks stating and explaining policy on formation, teaching, placement, assessment and awards. We are satisfied that these are either consistent with current published policy statements of the sponsoring churches or are actively being reviewed to make them so (because the policies of the sponsoring churches are also under development).

A.iii *The institution should show that it has built on earlier learning, including through action in response to: previous inspection, curriculum approval and follow-up reports; other external bodies' evaluation; and self-evaluations.*

19. The last inspection report affirmed the richness and complexity of Queen's, and noted the challenges it presented. Queen's is now an even larger and more diverse body. Currently there are five Centres of operation: Ministerial Formation; Discipleship and Theology; International Students; Black Ministries and Leadership and Graduate and Research. Each provides a base for a group of staff and focuses resources on agreed priorities and distinctive areas of work within the unity of the Foundation. The three largest Centres in terms of student and staff numbers are led by Directors; two Centres are led by team leaders under the general oversight of the Principal. The Principal's role has changed considerably. At the time of the last inspection his role was closely identified with ministerial training, acting as Principal of the College and the Course, and assisted by a Vice Principal who was also the Director of the Research Centre. Now the Principal's role is to provide vision and leadership to the Foundation, working with a Leadership Team consisting of the three Directors and the Director of Finance and Operations.

20. Further evidence of Queen's commitment to building on and learning from past experience was provided by proposals included in the latest version of the Business Plan which were discussed at a Governors' meeting we attended. This version is so recent that not all staff have yet had a chance to contribute. One of the thrusts of the plan is an attempt to clarify the best way to structure an institution which is first and foremost a Christian learning community. The Centres of operation are essentially a task-orientated structure which has served Queen's well in responding to considerable change, but the primary aims "to nurture and equip Christians ..." and to "prepare people for ministry and mission..." would be better served by a student-orientated structure that would more truly reflect the theology of the Foundation. Under consideration is a plan to restructure and create four 'centres' (although other names may be more appropriate) which directly relate to the purpose of those who come to join the community (i.e. theological education for discipleship, initial formation for ministry, continuing development in ministry and research). This purpose for joining is given priority over other distinctions (e.g. full-time or part-time, resident or dispersed, sponsored or independent, related to academic award, denomination or nationality). The prime focus for support for the student is to support them in the purpose for which they join the learning community and they are supported alongside other students in that 'Centre' with a common purpose. Members of the Foundation would engage together in the continued development

and active maintenance of a thriving learning community of Christians which is international, multi-cultural and ecumenical working together to nurture and equip each other for discipleship, mission and ministry in the church of the future. The continuing richness of the learning community relates directly to the students who are attracted to (or sent to) Queen's. The management and resource aspects of these are further considered in Section M.i.

21. We are very attracted to, and support, this concept for the future structure of the community that is Queen's. Our only slight reservation is whether the Sponsoring Churches will fully appreciate and actively support the unique opportunities provided by such a learning community. In particular it will be important to continue to sustain, and if possible increase, the number of Anglican students in initial formation; to promote Queen's as a resource for continuing development of ordained/lay ministers; to find resources to continue to attract students from overseas (possibly including those from the EU); to continue to seek to broaden the denominational make-up of the community and to invest in the communications and information technology platforms that support those parts of the community which are largely dispersed. Queen's is successful and growing, but it needs more external champions to ensure that it can sustain its unique nature and ethos.

22. Diversification and some key decisions of sponsoring churches have resulted in substantial numerical growth and change in balance of the student population. In 2013-14 there are 150 sponsored ministerial candidates, whereas at the time of the last inspection there were 85. The total number of registered students in 2013-14 is about 450, compared with 286 at the time of the last inspection. These numbers conceal the fact that nearly 100 students in 2006-7 were doing part time programmes, typically less than 30 credits a year. Now most students are studying 80-120 credits a year. This growth is welcome but it has put pressure on resources, creating large classes, and making the chapel and dining room very busy. The academic staff team has also increased from 17.5 (13.5 fte) to 23 (20.5 fte). At the time of the last inspection we noted that only three members of staff had remained in post since the previous inspection; this time there are 7 staff remaining in post. The increased number of students and the pressures being placed on facilities and staff resulted in a number of changes in 2012 such as splitting some classes and double teaching the same module. Queen's has also increased flexibility. For example, a college part-time pathway has been introduced which requires students to be present on two days of the week and which is attractive to those whose work or family responsibilities make availability at weekends difficult. A vital response to these changes is an expansion of capacity in all aspects of accommodation and we are impressed by the way Queen's Leadership Team and the Governors have responded to this now that the plans of the Sponsoring Churches are clearer and more developed.

23. Queen's have already fully addressed recommendation 2 of the 2007 Inspection regarding accommodation and have also introduced a change to the personnel in the domestic staff, with a new post focused on *Hospitality and Services*. The range and potential impact of Church reviews on the future of Queen's created an environment where the only campus development that could be undertaken was immediate and urgent. So, in the period since the last inspection:

- The squash court was converted to a teaching room;

- A new medium size teaching room was created in the New Building;
- A wireless network was installed (and renovated in 2013).

Now that the outcome of these reviews is clear, in particular the decision of the Methodist Church, a much needed planned maintenance and development programme for the campus is in place. In 2012 a start was made by:

- Re-furbishing the kitchen and dining room.
- New central heating for the Admin Building and Dining room.
- Converting study/bedrooms on the top floor of the Old Building to *en suite* and renovating all the facilities on this floor.

There is a Planned Preventative programme for the work to be done over the next 5 years to bring the campus to a good standard of repair, but urgent issues are:

- Replacement of the windows in the Old and New Buildings, and some in the Admin building.
- Refurbishment of staff studies/offices and staff room.
- Essential maintenance and repair work across the campus.

In order to accommodate the growing number of full-time students temporary accommodation has been rented this year off campus. This is not a long term option so an urgent priority is for campus development (See Section P).

24. Another aspect of change has been the developments in dispersed learning.

The partnership with the Diocese of Lichfield included a shared desire to make teaching and learning more local to strengthen the preparation for local forms of ministry. This meant in 2011 establishing a second teaching Centre near Stone, approximately 40 miles from Queen's, using the existing Diocesan retreat house and conference centre - Shallowford House. Most Lichfield Reader candidates attend evening classes at Shallowford House; all Lichfield Reader candidates have their residential weekends there. Lichfield OLM candidates normally have evening classes at Shallowford House, but their residential events take place on the Queen's campus. This dispersion of the student body, where some at least never come to Queen's, raises significant challenges:

- Quality Assurance issues to ensure parity of learning, teaching and resources in a second teaching and learning centre;
- Nurturing and sustaining a sense of belonging to Queen's even if never present on the campus.

This has resulted in the appointment of a new Tutor whose responsibilities and work is largely undertaken beyond the campus, but Queen's involvement in that person's appointment and continued contract with them is one way in which they have addressed this issue.

25. What Queen's has learned from this experience, now in its third year, is crucial to a new programme which involves even more dispersed learning. The Queen's Connexional Course is a new programme providing part-time learning and formation for Methodist student ministers who come from all parts of Great Britain and beyond (e.g. the Isle of Sark). Their residential learning is gathered at Queen's but their regular meetings are in regions, and their weekly learning is through on-line provision. Permanent Regional Tutors are now in place and an essential part of the process and their relationship to the gathered staff group at Queen's has to be supported by a careful induction into, and continuing engagement, with the Queen's learning community.

26. Now we turn our attention to self-evaluation and the institutional focus for quality assurance and enhancement. Regarding self-evaluation reviews and reports of external reviews, we have had access to:

- self-evaluation reviews for the last two years under the Churches' Quality in Formation process
- self-evaluation reviews for QAA accreditation and for Durham University
- reports from Newman University and Gloucestershire University
- report from the QAA for Recognized Educational Oversight and review in 2013.

All these reviews and reports indicate an institution that is self-aware and well versed in evaluative techniques. It also demonstrates the confidence of higher education institutions and public bodies in what is going on at Queen's. The evaluation of Queen's Foundation given in this report coincides exactly with their own Institutional Annual Self Assessment Report for 2012/2013. All outstanding actions from that report have been fully resolved.

27. Queen's institutional focus for academic quality and assurance and enhancement is the Academic Board supported by the Programme Boards. One of the reviewers attended the Academic Board dealing with quality assurance for Newman University awards. This meeting adequately demonstrated that quality assurance is embedded in the community. The desire to evaluate and reflect is part of the culture of the institution. Self-evaluation and self-reflective practice are managed in a participative and consultative environment which clearly results in a regular cycle of improvements to the learning undertaken in the community. Queen's is also an example to the wider church of an institution that is committed to learning about itself in order to be a better place for learning. In this realization we would like to encourage Queen's to continue to include institutional research as a clear focus in its broader range of research. In particular we would encourage an action based research project on the implementation of the QCC model of Formation in Ministry. In addition, there appears to be a disproportionately high number of ministry formation students who have difficulties relating to dyslexia/dyspraxia and Queen's have responded to this very creatively, but often this condition is not identified in sufficient time before commencing at Queen's to allow this good practice to be implemented from the very start. Queen's is in a unique and strong position to undertake some practical research in this important area.

28. At the Staff Meeting we were able to attend we were convinced by the Principal that, in this latest phase of implementing change and development, there is a greater need to be able to prioritise activity. As described above, there has been a lot of change where priorities have been decided more by necessity than internal planning. It is hoped that Queen's may now be able to 'consolidate' and plan and manage the competing claims for development and resources more internally. At present, it appears that the only place where academic and institutional management come together is at the Leadership Team and personally in the Principal. We would recommend that, in order to provide a clear overview of action designed to change and develop learning, institutional policies, physical and technical facilities, to determine relevant costs and to decide priorities, there should be more staff resource allocated to institutional planning and costing. Such an allocation would support the

Principal and his senior team and provide the sort of information that would form a more systematic basis for setting priorities and allocating resources for the future.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the Principal and the Governors consider funding a level of dedicated staff support to the institutional planning function to support decision making on priorities and allocating resources as the Foundation grows and increases its range of activity.

The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion A, Aims, Objectives and Achievements of the Institution.

B Relationships with other institutions

B.i There should be evidence of the institution's commitment to partnership with the other providers of theological education in the region.

29. We understand the West Midland RTP has significantly reduced its activities and commitments in the last two years as it has not been able to achieve many of its original aims. Any partnership with the West of England Ministry Training Course has not come about as the Governing Body of WEMTC entered into a partnership with Cuddesdon at Oxford. The Diocese of Coventry has changed its policy about OLM which has also affected Queens. However the RTP has given some impetus to the bi-lateral partnerships that have been formed by the Queen's Foundation with the Diocese of Lichfield for Reader and OLM training and with the Diocese of Worcester with Reader training. We have met tutors on the Lichfield Readers' course who speak very highly of the positive effect that the relationship with Queen's has achieved, and they equally stress that it has been a genuine partnership and is in no sense a take-over by Queen's. Queen's remains the main provider for theological education in the northern part of the Region, with WEMTC remaining the main provider in the southern part of the region. We were pleased to observe that at one of the events in Queen's while the review team was there a staff member of WEMTC was involved in delivering training for a Queen's event so there are definite collaborative links between the two institutions. The Methodist Midlands Regional Training Forum, which was created by the 2007 review mentioned in the Introduction, formally concluded its work in 2013.

B.ii The institution should draw fully on the resources of universities in teaching, quality assessment, staff development and the promotion of research.

30. There has been a complex set of relationships over the last few years with universities. In 2009/10 the University of Birmingham completed its review of the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion, including its collaborative arrangements. The review recommended terminating the arrangements with Queen's for both taught and research degrees. This was not on the grounds of the quality of Queen's programmes but partly because this work could be in competition with the University and partly because such collaborative partnerships were not in the strategic interests of the University. Consequently, a new validation agreement was made with Newman University College (now Newman University) for taught

degree programmes, which built on their collaboration with Queen's in the provision of a Foundation Degree in Mission and Ministry. Also in 2011 a new validation agreement was made with the University of Gloucestershire for research degrees. Both partnerships have proved positive and productive, and represented good value for money, but, with the development of Common Awards and Gloucestershire's review of its strategic interests (see para. 32 below) both arrangements have proved to be temporary. For some of the present students Queen's must maintain continuing close links with both universities because the courses for which the students are registered lead to academic awards of Newman and Gloucestershire.

31. For the future Durham University will provide the major basis for many awards offered at Queen's as evidenced by the received confirmation that Queen's will be validated for taught degrees under Common Awards from September 2014. The Methodist Church is a recognized partner within the overall agreement with Durham University.

32. In 2013 the University of Gloucestershire undertook a unilateral review of all its collaborative agreements and decided they were not in the strategic interests of the University. Queen's are therefore now seeking a new partner for research degrees and discussions are well advanced with the Free University of Amsterdam. That possibility was endorsed in principle by the Governing Body during the review, although a final formal agreement is still to be agreed. The reviewers believe this is an exciting and imaginative response to a University with a major international reputation.

B.iii *It should engage effectively with local churches, other faith communities and secular organisations so as to enhance formation for public ministry.*

33. The ecumenical nature of the Foundation ensures that it engages fully with a wide variety of other local churches including the black-led Pentecostal churches, while there are good links with both Jewish and Muslim institutions. We are also aware that there is a possibility of renewing a relationship with the Roman Catholic College of Oscott, also in Birmingham. Given the emphasis the Foundation places on its ecumenical nature we believe such a link is highly desirable in broadening its range of ecumenism, although we are aware of the additional pressures yet another link might place on the staff. The following recommendation should therefore be read in conjunction with Recommendation 4.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the proposed renewal of links with Oscott should be vigorously pursued.

34. The presence of international students has also been a significant factor in the students' experience within Queen's and some of the most complex relationships for the Foundation have involved QAA and UKBA/Home Office reviews. Continuous changes in government immigration policies have had a major impact on the recruitment of international students. Initially Queen's was licensed as a sponsor under the 'accreditation' of the Churches' Quality in Formation process. However, in 2011 this arrangement was terminated and Queen's had to be accredited by the

QAA if the institution wished to retain a sponsorship licence. Queen's accepted both the additional burden and cost because the engagement with the wider world church and the presence of international students is a priority in shaping the shared learning in the Queen's community. The institution was successfully accredited by the QAA to gain Recognized Educational Oversight (REO) status in 2012 and was successfully reviewed in June 2013 with "acceptable progress" (the second highest category) and this has provided Highly Trusted Sponsorship status.

35. Changes in the funding of UK students through Student Finance have also meant that in 2012-13 the institution had to be scrutinized by the QAA not only for its educational capacity but its institutional viability as well. Queen's has applied for Alternative Provider designation and will know the result of this later in 2014.

36. The reviewers are confident that, from the extensive experience of the last six years, the institution engages with a range of partners extremely well. However we are concerned for Queen's in that the new partnerships (The Methodist Learning Network, Durham University/the Sponsoring Churches, the Free University of Amsterdam) are not so straightforward as previously. There are likely to be more of them (a possible link with Oscott, in addition to the existing ones with Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, India and the Theological College of Lanka, Sri Lanka) and we feel there are some that still haven't yet been worked out (e.g. financing the Selly Oak cultural inheritance described in para. 9 above). A lot of this is in the very capable hands of the Principal and other members of the Leadership Team. Although there is a sense of moving into a period of 'consolidation' and concentrating on changes that are still working their way through, this will entail a very careful balancing of managing key external relationships and managing essential internal development. We have been concerned and disappointed to hear that only recently two of the most important new relationships (the Methodist Church Learning Network and Durham) have not run smoothly. With regard to the Methodist Church it is not surprising that there should be some difficulties in implementing such a huge project as the Learning Network in a very tight timescale. We must also remember that Queen's is now central to the Methodist Church's implementation of the Fruitful Field vision of the Learning Church across Great Britain (including some remote island communities). Focusing formation for ministry at Queen's is only the start of implementing Fruitful Field. In addition it has become clear that Common Awards is a three-way partnership and Queen's, having obtained validation for Common Awards with Durham University then had to recast its curriculum because guidance from the Churches about the proportion of 10 credit modules permissible was received after the validation event. It will be important to the future development and success of Common Awards that all those involved recognise that there are demands placed on a three-way validation and review partnership that are very different to the conventional pattern of university validation. Contracts, Memoranda of Understanding and Partnership Agreements all need careful management for them to fully realise what is intended and hoped for. In total we feel 'the management of collaboration' needs more dedicated staff effort if it is not to put unacceptable pressure on the Leadership Team.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that in view of the importance and complexities of the range of institutional collaboration the Principal and the Leadership Team should consider allocating a dedicated member of staff to assist them on managing/overseeing partnership arrangements a) to ease the pressure on the Leadership Team, b) to promote and encourage more effective partnership arrangements and c) to keep them under review and ensure that they are working effectively.

37. In all these areas the reviewers had confidence in the relationships the Foundation has with other institutions, but note Recommendation 1 in the Introduction.

The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion B, Relationships with other institutions.
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SECTION TWO: CURRICULUM FOR FORMATION AND EDUCATION

C Curriculum for formation and education

Reviewers will consider the curriculum's design and content.

C.i *There should be a theological, formational and educational rationale for the institution's approach to mission and to formation for ministry and discipleship.*

38. Queen's describes itself as a community of over 400 people "living, worshipping, learning and meeting in varied ways". The institution has a long history of delivering education and training in theology including ministerial formation. Students are prepared for ordination and Reader and other authorised ministries through structured theological education and formation in cooperation with the sponsoring church. The recently presented Mission Statement states that Queen's is dedicated to the twin aims of excellence in theological education and personal formation. The programmes of study are accordingly intended to

- Nurture and equip Christians in their discipleship
- Prepare people for mission and ministry in lay and ordained roles
- Resource research that serves the mission of God in the world.

Queen's theological rationale is most often expressed in relationships and actions rather than just statements. We have not found any aspect of the activity at Queen's which is not based on a theological rationale – from the setting of aims and objectives, forming and being a Christian learning community, the design of modules and learning materials, assessment and learning support, placements and worship to the nature of leadership and stewardship of resources. In addition the practice of theological reflection is not just taught, but is a vital ingredient of the whole community.

39. Our review of teaching sessions and conversations with staff and students confirm that the courses help develop theological understanding, present a range of views and challenge preconceptions. Students are also helped to develop skills in learning, evaluation and reflection. Opportunities to plan and lead worship also help develop confidence in this area and in preaching. Within the programmes there is a module on formation and additional sessions that provide opportunities to reflect on and develop themselves as individuals and in their calling. There are specific sessions also designed to develop skills needed for worship, leading and preaching. These are intended to develop the student's "being, knowing and doing". There is also "context-based learning" within a church environment that enables practical outworking in mission. The programmes offered have been subject to validation from several institutions as described in Section A.iii. The programmes contain modules that cover biblical studies, theology, mission and pastoral and practical skills. All students on ministerial formation undertake a placement in a church environment. There is also active engagement with the wider community which is seen for example in the training programmes for leaders through the Centre for Black Ministries and Leadership.

C.ii *The institution should offer, and periodically review, a set of programmes that will enable candidates to be prepared for their ministries and/or meet their learning needs.*

40. Queens offers programmes leading to the Foundation Degree, BA including Cert HE and MA and PhD programmes. Among the programmes students follow, there are the Foundation Degree in Mission and Ministry, BA in Theology and MA in Theological and Transformative Practice. These programmes form the main vehicles for theological education for ordained and lay ministry. They are all validated by Newman University and subject to annual monitoring. All these programmes and others offered at BA, MA and MPhil/PhD level and validated by Newman as well as Birmingham University and the University of Gloucestershire have also been successfully reviewed by the QAA. Each student is assessed as they enter and placed on an individual learning plan which allows different entry and exit points. This allows them to complete a programme that is appropriate to their educational needs and provides for recognition of relevant study previously completed successfully. In addition, formational elements are determined by the requirements of the sponsoring church and remain common to students following training for particular ministry whether ordained or lay.

C.iii *The academic and formational assessment methods should enable the institution to advise church leaders on the suitability of candidates for their ministry.*

41. The various academic assessment methods used are typical to academic programmes in the HE sector. The assessment of each module may involve formative (e.g., preparative work for a seminar) and summative (a 3000 word essay) assessments. The latter are marked by the tutor and moderated by a second tutor. Module performance is ratified by an Examination Board (including External Examiners) constituted by Newman University.

42. Formational assessment is done in collaboration with the Training Minister based in the local or home church of each student. Placement supervisors also contribute to formational assessment. This follows the setting up of a Learning and Formation Agreement or the Local Church Agreement. The student also produces a Worship Portfolio and a Learning Journal. There are also sessions with a Personal Tutor. The Academic Director and either the Director of Methodist Formation or the Director of Anglican Formation have oversight of the process and together form a view of each individual before advising church leaders on the suitability of each student for ministry.

<p>The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion C, Curriculum for formation and education.</p>
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SECTION THREE: MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT

D Community and corporate life

Reviewers will consider the institution's quality of common life. Is it a good place in which to live, work and study?

D.i The institution should offer a clear statement of how it understands corporate life, reflected in its training for ministry and the working relationships between members

43. Queen's derives its identity from God as 'the centre and goal of our corporate and personal life', with the primary aim of being 'an hospitable and inclusive community to which all in the Foundation belong and which binds all in the Foundation together in common and mutual life.' It sees itself as celebrating diversity and enabling 'distinctive constituencies and networks of groups to develop which celebrate, affirm and nurture the particular vocations and activities of the different centres within the Foundation.' It aims to 'enable strong relationships of trust' and 'ensure clear and robust lines of communication and accountability'. The governors expressed their full commitment to this vision when we met with them.

44. Diversity is strongly characteristic of the corporate life of Queen's as a training environment. It functions as an assemblage of groups and pathways which overlap to a greater or lesser extent. Teaching sessions may be shared by students studying to different levels and drawn from any of the various Centres which constitute the Foundation. Teaching groups may include independent students. There may therefore be little group cohesion within a teaching group as a whole, but rather in sub-sets within it. Observation showed frequent use of small-group discussion: this allows students to relate to people they know well and/or to those who are less familiar. A permanent small-group environment is provided by mixed-denomination cell groups and worship teams, and interviews with students evidenced the high value placed on both.

45. Students interviewed felt themselves to be well supported within this complex structure, valuing the opportunity to explore new ideas and new spiritualities. They are well aware of college policies, and year-group representatives enable good communication with committees and with the Governors' Meeting. The observed Community Meeting functioned well as a place for the interchange of information through student representatives (see section L). The highly collaborative nature of staff oversight of students models a reflexive and accountable community, and students reported viewing staff as accessible and responsive. Ancillary staff said that they feel themselves to be very much part of the community.

46. Part-time students on the Queen's Course (Anglican) and on the new Queen's Connexional Course (Methodist) are situated in a yet more complex community structure. They value the group environment (as applicable) at regional groups, weekends and Easter School, but can find themselves in a teaching group with strangers or studying alone online. We urge Queen's to ensure that the ground-rules about appropriate sharing of pastoral concerns in a dispersed community

(confidentiality, use of email etc.) are explicitly addressed at the start of these courses.

47. The nature of the timetable, with all teaching for full-time students concentrated between Monday morning and Thursday lunchtime, creates a range of pressures on the community. Such concentrated input does not suit all learning styles. A large proportion of the student body is resident at home from Thursday afternoon until Sunday evening, so there is very little time for face-to-face discussion, reflection and informal learning in community, although electronic media are widely used. Cell groups also use these media e.g. for an email prayer circle. The number of fully resident ministerial students is relatively small: interviews suggest that spouses/partners can feel isolated, particularly when there are small children. The students resident at Victoria Halls can find the 20-minute walk burdensome, but they also value their special community, and the opportunity to leave the campus and its pressures behind at the end of the day. (See section P)

48. The community comes together in daily worship, but the Chapel is not large enough to accommodate everyone at the busiest points in the week. They sing well (a good sign of community cohesion). Students from different Centres and pathways interact well at mealtimes. The allotment (see para. 97) provides a very special place for interaction between students from different groups and is particularly valued by parents (for the joy and activity it gives the children) and children (for getting dirty).

49. Chaplaincy structures are under review as the current funding for the one part-time (40% f/t) chaplain (highly valued by the students interviewed) is coming to an end. The chaplain herself identifies the pressure of 'needing to be seen to cope' as an important factor in causing students to delay talking to her until things have become serious. The Principal and staff are looking at the possibility of having a chaplaincy team, providing chaplaincy to the institution as well as the students, and available to all student groups. The staff meeting has set up a small group to look at the issue, including the question of funding.

50. Chaplaincy, as a model of community engagement and mission is very powerful and 'chaplaincy' can be carried out locally in informal but effective ways by committed lay people. Street pastors, railway station chaplains, local schools, retirement homes are all examples. We feel it is important to continue to ensure that due emphasis is given to these models and how to implement them with local congregations and consequently, how to teach 'chaplaincy' to those involved. Students need to be able to appreciate that the chaplaincy support they receive at Queen's is a model of how they need to serve their own churches and wider communities and in turn how it can be a practical model for those in their pastoral charge to be able to express their own discipleship.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that Queen's should pursue the aspiration to develop a robust chaplaincy team with a wider remit. This might suitably be combined with a role in the teaching of, and research into, chaplaincy.

- D.ii *There should be a clear statement of its understanding of issues of gender, ethnic grouping and disability and other matters of natural justice; its training, governance and community life should reflect this.*

51. The Foundation has a strong, explicit and practically-grounded Equal Opportunities Policy which is currently under review. Seeking to be 'a community that celebrates and embodies the rich diversity of God's realm, and especially the ethnic diversity of the West Midlands and Birmingham' it has made a commitment to '(work) actively with the churches and other partners to encourage, attract and recruit students and candidates from ethnic minorities' in order to increase its proportion of students and candidates from ethnic minorities to a minimum of 15% of the total.

52. Courses on racial and gender awareness are compulsory for ministerial students. Some staff perceive an uneven level of gender awareness and cross-referencing in teaching materials across the curriculum. The ethnic diversity of Queen's is one of its most notable features. Students from Black-led/Black majority churches participate across the curriculum and are represented on groups and committees. Students with special needs are well supported, both as individuals and by means of study skills courses. Former students and their supervising ministers speak highly of the Foundation's ability to diagnose and support dyslexic students. In two cases of discontinuance, however, there was evidence that the student's own failure to carry out necessary administrative steps had led to significant delay in putting support in place. Procedures, as evidenced from paperwork and interviews, are robust and appropriate, but early action is crucial. We urge the Foundation to continue to encourage the sending authorities to indicate concerns in this area so that support can be offered as soon as possible. As reported under section A.ii, the Equality and Diversity and Safeguarding Policies are under active revision.

The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion D, Community and corporate life.

E Worship and training in public worship

Reviewers will look at whether the arrangements for common worship and the policies underlying them are satisfactory.

- E.i *The institution's policy and practice in corporate worship should reflect the tradition of the wider church and the liturgical inheritance of faith.*

53. Given the ecumenical nature of the Foundation and the varied training paths that are followed, where some students are resident but others commute in daily, the Foundation has wisely decided that during the week the main acts of corporate worship will be in the middle of the day at which all ministerial students are expected to be present and at 5 pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays when ministerial students are expected to be present for at least one of them. The principle expressed by this practice the Foundation describes as 'the most important feature of our worship is that it should *gather* the community each day rather than dividing or splitting it.' That seems to the reviewers to be wholly sensible. Both Methodist and Anglican hymnbooks are regularly used.

54. In addition for those on the weekday course in Queen's each ministerial candidate is asked at the beginning of the academic year to agree with a tutor the ways in which they will respond to their denominational requirements for daily worship in their Learning and Formation Agreement and a measure of flexibility is permitted. A number of Anglican students decide themselves to meet to say the daily office in the chapel every morning and to say or sing compline in the evenings, and a number of Methodist students choose to join them. Others say the office individually. The staff believe that allowing the students the freedom to make their own decisions about this builds on their adult sense of responsibility, with the result that what is agreed with the tutor is normally well observed. Student comments confirmed that sense of taking some personal responsibility for this leads to patterns being well established for each individual. We endorse this approach.

E.ii *There should be a policy on, and provision for, a balance of worship, including authorised and innovative forms, which recognises and equips candidates to work within the variety of practice within the sponsoring church.*

55. As evidenced in paragraphs 53-54 above we observed that this policy is well practised at the Foundation.

E.iii *Ministerial candidates should be effectively trained to plan, prepare and conduct public worship and they should receive critical and constructive comment from staff and peers.*

56. On Wednesdays the middle of the day service takes the form of corporate silence, but on the other days the mid-day service is student led, taken by designated teams of students who are both Anglican and Methodist, and is normally recognizably Methodist or Anglican in character. The reviewers observed good examples of both during the review. Students preach and at the services we attended the quality of preaching was certainly adequate and at times very good. There is a regular pattern of feedback from the staff to those taking the services. The 5 pm service is a staff led Eucharist and normally one in a week is Methodist in character and the other Anglican. Again we observed good examples of both. Both the mid-day and early evening acts of worship were well attended.

57. At the weekends for Anglican students the worship is the daily offices led by students and the Sunday Eucharist is taken by one of the staff. We understand there is a regular mixture of the traditional and modern and on the Sunday for ordinands when the reviewers were present it was essentially a BCP Eucharist. A similar pattern of a mixture of the traditional and the innovative operated at the Readers Weekend for Lichfield students. At the Connexional Weekends the worship, with the exception of the Sunday midday Eucharist, is planned and led by one of the regional groups of students. The student-led worship we observed was well-planned, creative and appropriate. We were assured that students experience a wide variety of models of Eucharistic presidency, in accordance with Methodist discipline and practice.

58. This is certainly provided through the daily acts of corporate worship in the College Chapel, but each student also has a link parish or church and circuit,

possibly but not inevitably, the one from where they came. They are encouraged to take some part in the regular worship of that church or circuit and to develop a relationship there or to change and redevelop the relationship if it is in the place from which they came. In addition each student also has a placement with a church or circuit at some stage in their preparation which will include some involvement in public worship with proper feedback from the supervisors to the student and to the Foundation. From the evidence of a meeting of some reviewers with placement supervisors this is an effective element in the ministerial formation. We have confidence in the Foundation's practice of worship and in the training provided in public worship.

E.iv The liturgical space should be adequate for its purpose.

59. We are conscious that at times the Chapel at Queen's can feel very full and that if the student body continues to increase substantially it will raise some questions about how that can be handled. This is not an immediate crisis and it may be that different arrangements with seating will ameliorate the situation. We are also aware that the staff both understand the potential problem and have the skills, liturgical and administrative, to find sensible ways of dealing with it.

The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion E, Worship and training in public worship.

F Ministerial, Personal and Spiritual Formation

Reviewers will consider how well the institution helps learners in their ministerial, personal and spiritual formation and self-awareness.

F.i The institution should enable candidates to be immersed in the traditions of their own church and to gain an empathetic understanding of church and faith traditions other than their own.

60. Both current and former students highly value the ecumenical nature of their training at Queen's, enabling them to explore new ideas and encounter new traditions of worship and spirituality. There are informal opportunities at mealtimes and at breaks in the Common Room for conversation and discussion across traditions and emphases. Cell groups and worship teams enable personal encounter and the development of empathy between students from different traditions. Placement supervisors value the care taken in setting up placements to extend students' ecclesiological, as well as their social, experience while keeping them located in their own tradition. A former Methodist student, now a probationer, reflected that relationships with Anglican colleagues at Queen's were so good that they left her unprepared for some of the attitudes she encountered on going into circuit. An observed class on ordination emphasised the Church of England's willingness to be receptive to change and flexible, which again may not be borne out in students' later experience.

61. Worship experiences, both in planning and in participation, meet the criteria for this section (see E.i) Nearly all of the students we encountered supported the staff

perception that the theologically broad community helps students to deal with traditions other than their own. Teaching sessions involving worship (e.g. Psalms in Worship) engaged students in a broad range of liturgical and musical experiences, both practical and theoretical. Students on the Queen's Connexional Course do not have the same rich ecumenical environment, although this may change as it is hoped that in the future students from other traditions join in teaching sessions at Queen's.

62. An observed session with two highly-placed denominational officers (the Methodist Assistant Secretary of Conference and the Church of England's Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and Theology) gave students a realistic insight into the problems and possibilities of the Covenant.

63. The largely Anglican/Methodist composition of most teaching groups, together with the presence of students from Pentecostal traditions, gives a somewhat constricted ecumenical experience: the possibility of renewing the relationship with Oscott gives an opportunity to extend in a different direction (see Recommendation 3).

F.ii *It should offer corporate and individual guidance for learners, including encouragement to seek confidential spiritual counsel and to maintain a regular private prayer life.*

64. The Learning and Formation Agreement asks students to consider: 'How will you grow into the expectations and disciplines of your sponsoring church? (e.g. Anglicans should reflect on how they will pray a daily office; Methodist deacons might reflect on the Rule of Life).' Anglican students are guided and encouraged by their tutors within this wording. It provides, however, relatively weak guidance for Methodists ('might' rather than 'should' for deacons, and no guidance or suggestions for presbyters). The concentration of Methodist training under the oversight of Queen's offers an opportunity for Connexional reflection and review in this area.

Recommendation 6

In view of the concentration of Methodist ministerial training at Queen's, we recommend that the Foundation should ask the Methodist Church to review its policies and strategies for preparing student presbyters and deacons to enter into 'a covenant relationship ... in which they are held accountable by the Church in respect of their ... Christian discipleship' in personal and spiritual as well as functional terms. (SOs 700 (2), 701 (2))

65. The dispersed training environment of students on the Queen's Connexional Course means that oversight of their spiritual growth may be located in several places. The regional group would seem to be the place to bring it all together, and in particular to articulate the relationship between the 'safety' of the link (or 'home') church and the challenging environment of course and placement in the student's spiritual growth, practice and commitment.

66. All Anglican students are strongly encouraged to have spiritual directors: Methodist students have accompanists who are appointed by the Oversight

Committee and are accountable to it, but their primary relationship is with the student that they accompany.

67. The tutorial relationship is crucially important in providing formational guidance: a broad range of past and current students testified to their appreciation of the care taken by tutors, their availability and the quality of the relationship.

F.iii *Its common life and the guidance offered should enable students to grow in Christian discipleship with a view to exercising a public role in ministry and engaging with the world.*

68. As noted above, the ecumenical nature of the common life of the Foundation, and its expression in worship, are key to the fulfilment of this objective. The placement experience plays a major part in students' growth into a public role in ministry. (For further analysis and recommendations see H.i below.) Within the college context the tutorial relationship, the cell groups and the corporate worship all contribute to this process in an appropriate way. The Spirituality and Ministry course plays a valued role.

69. The common life of the diverse Queen's community offers a stimulating environment for students to develop their engagement with the world. In addition students are encouraged to take part in activities and projects of social engagement, either in Birmingham or in their local context (e.g. helping at the Night Shelter). The multi-cultural and varied social context of Birmingham is sometimes a significant factor in Anglican students' choice of Queen's for their training. The integrative nature of teaching methods and materials promotes 'engagement with the world' at several levels.

F.iv *The teaching and ministerial staff should model an appropriate pattern of spirituality, continued learning and reflection on practice.*

70. Teaching staff model a wide range of patterns of spirituality, maintaining individual and institutional distinctiveness in an appropriate way. Mutual reflection and continuing shared learning, are modelled throughout the life of the institution as this report demonstrates. Students at the 'extreme ends' of the continuum of theology and spirituality may not find it so easy to relate to the broad Queen's model, despite the variety of personal spirituality and worship displayed. The issue has a particular resonance for Methodists now because, although the Methodist Church has not had 'party colleges', the variety of spirituality derived from its tradition has to some extent been differently embodied in different institutions. The responsibility for guarding this variety now falls on Queen's.

<p>The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion F, Ministerial, personal and spiritual formation.</p>

SECTION FOUR: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

G Teaching and learning: content, method and resources

Reviewers will consider the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning activities, methods and resources.

G.i *The units of teaching and learning should be well structured, with clear and appropriate aims.*

71. Each module we have engaged with, by observation of teaching, reading module handbooks, talking with students or staff, or reading the Moodle VLE entries has been well structured and clear. The handbooks all clearly state each module's aims, content and intended learning outcomes in relation to:

- a) Subject-specific Knowledge and Understanding
- b) Subject-specific Skills and Competence, and
- c) General Transferable Skills

The handbooks also describe the teaching timetable, assessment specification and criteria for the module and provide a list of learning resources including a general bibliography. The module handbooks are often complemented by a hand-out for each teaching session, describing specific learning outcomes along with information on core texts and additional reading and outline notes of the teaching session. Material used in teaching sessions, including powerpoint, along with everything in the module handbook and hand-outs is also accessible on the Moodle VLE. Modules for the QCC use Moodle as the distance-based delivery system for all learning materials. All modules are subject to the quality assurance processes of Newman University, which include the requirement that the module is reviewed at the completion of its teaching by both tutor and students. The results of this review are fed into the continual process of improvement of modules. There is also a requirement for each module to be cross referenced to the learning outcomes specified by the sponsoring churches.

G.ii *There should be a proper balance between the academic, formational and practical aspects of training.*

72. The teaching modules (either delivered in classes or on line) and the placement module are substantial pieces of work and their content and level are validated by Newman University. The integration of these with the Learning and Formation Agreement, the Local Church Agreement, the Worship Portfolio, the Learning Journal and Personal Tutorials is also part of the validation according to Foundation Degree precepts. In addition the reviewers have been able to talk to students and staff and we are quite convinced that the academic, formational and practical aspects of learning are in proper balance. It will be important to carry the Foundation Degree precepts on developing 'the reflective practitioner' across to the Common Awards experience.

G.iii *Learning programmes should be varied in format and method, with use of student experience, courses, seminars, tutorials, one-to-one, groups, placements and private study.*

73. Queen's is clearly committed to being a learning community that desires to learn with and from one another. It is part of the vision statement. During our visits to Queen's and to Shallowford House we saw excellent examples of teaching in the form of lectures, seminars, practical exercises, group learning and student presentations. There was a rich diversity of styles, often within the same learning session. The students were fully engaged, interactive and appreciative. There was an expectation of student preparation through private study and group activity. The methods used encourage theological reflection and shared learning and assume a high level of individual and group accountability. Learning on placement and in church attachments is integrated with all other aspects of the learning activity.

G.iv *There should be an appropriate learning environment, with adequate resources including library and information and communications technology.*

74. On Queen's current site there are four main teaching rooms, five seminar rooms, a chapel and a library. The future accommodation plans include another large teaching room and an increase in study spaces for a growing number of non-residents. Shallowford House has three main teaching rooms, a chapel and a small library. The main site teaching rooms are light and airy and equipped with good audio visual facilities but could be improved with more up to date whiteboard and marker facilities. On occasion the white boards and pens were providing too faint an image for everyone in the room.

75. Since the last inspection, the library at Queen's has responded to the growing needs of Queen's changing student profile, with nearly twice as many loans in 2012/13 as in 2005/6 and a 55% increase in the number of staff and student members. The Library is light, bright and modern. It was previously housed in two large rooms that were not physically connected. An extension was built to house more books/periodicals but also to connect the two existing areas into a coherent and well-resourced area with well spaced individual study spaces with wifi access. There are around 50K books and an annual non-staff spend of £25K, which provides for around 1K new items per annum including around 100 replacements and multiple copies of core course materials. As well as two computer terminals dedicated to online catalogue search and one to logging out loans, there are six other terminals available to students/staff. In the light of increased ownership of laptops/tablets this appears to be a satisfactory provision. Bearing in mind the fact that the Library is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, an annual loss of c. 100 items is acceptable in relation to the prospective cost of a secure and controlled system of borrowing and the value of continuous access to students is incalculable. Other resources and services, including 80 current journal titles and a variety of electronic services are also available.

76. To support the new services, Queen's have continued to invest in information skills training and the library website now provides an information skills online module to support students. All new students, part-time, full-time and research, are

inducted to the services provided by the Library on their first visit to Queen's and the services are also accessible on-line. Due to the size of the College and his inclusion in the Academic Board membership and the Staff Common Room, the Librarian has good contact with academic staff to be able to assess their needs. New acquisitions were identified 80% at staff initiative and 20% at the Librarian's initiative.

77. The Librarian is supported by one assistant who works one morning a week. Otherwise all other help was from student volunteers. On a recent survey to assess the most important aspects of the library service the students rated the four most valued aspects as 24 hour access, breadth of stock, on line access to services, journals and databases and having a full time Librarian.

78. One of the biggest and increasing challenges is the support for Dispersed Learning. At Shallowford House control of loans and returns is locally administered. With the Introduction of the Connexional course, book boxes in Regional Centres are supplemented by more electronic versions of key texts and developing the use of eBooks. This development is described by the Librarian in an article he wrote for the ABTAPL Network, of which we have a copy. Through his links with the ABTAPL Bulletin, the Librarian is also able to negotiate appropriate access to local theological libraries.

79. Looking to future partnerships, the Librarian had been assessing the impact of Common Awards and reminded us that all Common Awards students will have access to other local university Libraries. He has not yet been able to assess the potential impact of a research student partnership with the Free University of Amsterdam but thought the potential issues with a continental university could be considerable. However, it was known that FUA had considerable resources in this area.

80. Queen's has successfully invested in the use of the Moodle VLE and for the last two years this has played a full and integral role in support of all parts and to all members of the learning community and is especially evident in the support provided to dispersed students. The Ministry Division has commissioned the creation of a common VLE platform (cavle.org) to support the Common Awards within which each TEI will have its own section. During our review visit, Queen's staff had their first opportunity to be briefed on the progress of this enterprise. They were encouraged by what they saw and heard. It is a platform which can provide more functionality than currently available in Moodle. However, they were quite dismayed that there is no easy straightforward way to migrate all that has been developed in Moodle across to the new environment, especially in time for September 2014. The facility to use the new VLE for video-conferencing (instead of Skype) is part of the package.

81. Looking at information technology more generally there is Wifi available across almost all of the Queen's main site, but it is variable in its reliability. There is a better facility at Shallowford House. We suspect that in order to extend access to the planned Campus Development (either down the road or on campus) the facility on the main site will need an upgrade. With the planned increase of dispersed students, the development of Skype (or similar) seminars and the increased interaction with other parts of the Methodist Learning Network there will be a need to invest in a significant upgrade of telecommunications and Wifi facilities. Queen's already has

academic staff who have successfully developed the Moodle VLE and other ICT facilities to provide essential support to the learning community and we understand there are also individuals from outside the institution who provide expertise and support. However, we believe there is a need for the foreseeable future for Queen's to invest staff resource in a greater level of ICT expertise than is currently available both to support existing academic staff and provide stability and confidence in the task of growing and maintaining what is now an essential academic and administrative service.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the Principal and the Governors consider funding a level of dedicated staff support to the ICT function as the Foundation grows and increases its reliance on such professional expertise for its academic and administrative efficiency.

G.v Staff should provide students with constructive formal and informal feedback assessment, against published assessment criteria, both in terms of academic progress and in terms of preparation for beginning public ministry.

82. Queen's regard assessment as first of all a theological matter. Assessment is part of ministerial formation before it is considered in the context of Higher Education. Assessment in formation throws into sharp relief the awareness that ministry in the Church has to do with order, accountability and authority. It involves discernment and judgement, and challenges unquestioning affirmation of others. It raises sharp issues about ordained ministry as itself representing this authority and accountability. Queen's describe assessment as embracing two elements that can often be in tension. First, it must be oriented towards enabling learning and formation, designed to assist growth and development. This formative assessment is often expressed in modes of feedback, critical friendship, appraisal and evaluation. This sort of assessment recognises that we are *all* learners, and that authority and accountability under God are exercised mutually. Secondly, assessment must be capable of making critical judgements about competencies and, most complex of all, about the person. In short, does a person meet the expectations of the learning outcomes agreed by our churches that indicate whether a person can be ordained or stationed to public ministries? This summative assessment is expressed through end of year reports and formal grades. This sort of assessment recognises that tutors have expertise and experience, and are entrusted by the churches and academic institutions to make judgements (always in collaborative and accountable ways) about a person's capability and 'fitness to practice'.

83. The External Examiner's perspective is very helpful here. He has confirmed that the assessment procedures of the programme are appropriate to the subject matter. He had access to all student work that had been moderated by the team. "Student work was of a variety of types, reflecting a diverse range of assessment tools including placement reports, learning journals, recordings of oral presentations (with supporting presentation material), essays, portfolios, etc. All work was in line with the descriptions published in the Programme Specification. Assessment tools were relevant and properly demanding. The oral presentations, learning journals, verbatim reports and placement reports allowed students to demonstrate particular

competencies in skills relevant to the practice of Christian ministry. Essays allowed students to demonstrate “traditional” theological literacy. There was a good balance of “theory” and “practice”. Students had scope to respond to assessment methods in creative ways, and this reflected the fact that students were working in an environment in which they were encouraged to “take ownership” of their own learning.” The examiner confirmed that the range of assessments allowed him to get a sense of student achievement. He also remarked that “Feedback to students is of a very good – indeed, excellent – quality. It is very constructive, and written with the student in mind.” In discussion with students, they too found the quality of feedback extremely helpful.

The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion G, Teaching and learning, content, method and resources.

H Practical and pastoral theology

H.i *The institution’s learning structures and formational activity should integrate theory and practice and enable students to grow as theologically reflective practitioners in the context of the developing and diverse society in which they will minister.*

84. The ecumenical nature of the Queen’s experience is identified as crucial to its integrative nature. Former students appreciate it in a new light when they enter into ministry. Birmingham itself may also be viewed as a place of integration: some students identified proximity to the ‘real world’ as a factor in their choice of Queen’s for their training. It is to be hoped that the ecumenical environment of the Queen’s Connexional Course will become more diverse as its numbers increase. Given the Queen’s ethos, we would expect and encourage an emphasis on ecumenical experience in the QCC’s local learning and placements.

85. Integration through learning structures is built in to the nature of the learning experience and its evaluation: observed lectures and classes related theory and practice well, although difficulty with the time management of a highly interactive session sometimes meant that reflection was cut short at the end. Sessions dealing with pastoral practice were well related to students’ prior experience and to the tutor’s own, and difficult personal issues were sensitively handled. All observed courses included assignment titles integrating theology and contemporary issues.

86. The learning process is described as ‘intentionally formative’. All students have twelve formal meetings in total with their tutors – six *per annum* for full-time students and four *per annum* for part-time students – and these are the key formational encounters. The initial Local Church Agreement and Learning and Formation Agreement, drawn up in consultation between student, staff and link church, map the students’ starting point, set the agenda for their curriculum and are reviewed at the end of each year. The Worship Portfolio and the Learning Journal are designed to enable students to reflect in an integrative way and are monitored through discussion and feedback. The reporting process is highly collaborative, beginning with a student self-appraisal and discussion of outcomes with the personal tutor, followed by input from staff members, discussion at the staff meeting and comment on the draft report

from two other staff members, the Directors of Ministerial Formation and the Principal. The LFA for Years 2 (full-time) and 3 (part-time) is agreed in the light of the reports.

87. Former students spoke with appreciation of the way that their learning at Queen's had moved them on in their formation. The joyful discovery of new gifts, the broadening of mind and spirit and the appropriate challenge described as 'an express train ... hitting loving buffers' were gratefully identified. This was particularly so for those identified as needing help with dyslexia.

88. The link church, which remains the same throughout the training period, is not a placement but is intended to be a 'comfortable enough' place where the student will feel supported while trying out new activities and beginning to move into their new role. No report is made from the link church, but it is included in the student's Learning Journal and Worship Portfolio. Placements, on the other hand, are designed to take students into new territory, whether culturally, theologically or ecclesiologically (or all three). Placement churches are carefully chosen on the basis of staff's personal knowledge and advice from DDOs and Chairs of District: they are expected to be clear about their ability to meet the student's identified needs. The Directors acknowledge that it is more difficult to find appropriate placements for part-time students because of geographical restrictions.

89. Full-time students have until now had their placements over 8 weeks, returning to college on Tuesdays for a pastoral theology course. Acting on advice from placement supervisors, who found this model unhelpful, staff have decided that placements will in future extend over 5 uninterrupted weeks for full-time students and 100 hours (distributed as appropriate to circumstances) for part-time students, divided between 80 hours' practice and 20 hours' reflection. They will be preceded by a block course in pastoral theology.

90. There is some pressure on Birmingham Methodism to find appropriate placements. Staff think this may be more apparent than real, but share with the Birmingham District a concern about a possible lack of suitable supervisors. The pressure caused by larger circuits (over-stretched staff and long travel times for supervisors) is a cause for concern not only in Birmingham but across the whole Connexion. There are ample placement settings for Anglicans.

91. Placement supervisors perceive the choosing of the placement location by Queen's to be done with care, taking into account the students' previous experience and what they need rather than what they want. They value the process, the clarity about expectations and the clear but not too onerous paperwork. Queen's staff, in their turn, appreciate the quality of supervisors, their willingness to train, the quality of their reports and their willingness to engage with difficult issues. There was however, among the supervisors we met, a sense that not all their colleagues give students sufficient preparation about the cultural norms to be expected, and respected, in the placement context.

92. Supervisors meet the students for the first time at Queen's together with the staff organisers. They are encouraged to communicate any anxieties to staff early in the placement: if necessary in cases of serious concern a meeting of supervisor, student

and staff member may be held at the halfway mark. At the end of the placement students identify both immediate and long-term goals and discuss with their tutor how they may be met.

93. Placement reports are written by tutors after discussion with the student and placement supervisor. They feed into the student's final -year programme by way of the Learning and Formation Agreement. Seven supervisors (four Methodist, three Anglican) with considerable experience, identified only one example of a student who had 'floundered' on placement. They were however concerned about the pressure on full-time students' time, feeling that two years is not long enough to garner experience and process it adequately before being flung into the maelstrom of church life.

94. The fact that students are living in several worlds at the same time, while complicated, is perceived by staff, who have long experience of this pattern, as an aid to integration. Each context acts as a lens to view the other(s).

95. A breakdown in vocational and personal integration may lead to discontinuance for Methodist students or withdrawal for Anglicans. Students are kept fully aware of this process and are encouraged not to hide problems. For Anglicans the appropriate Director of Ministerial Formation works closely with DDOs: the issue may be a crisis of health, vocation, relationship or faith. Students may be given an extra year: it is many years since a student came to the point of being 'not recommended for ordination'. For Methodists, their Director of Ministerial Formation works within the well-established Methodist procedures involving the local Oversight Committee and the relevant Connexional Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee, in which she has confidence despite the time-pressures of connexional deadlines. She perceives issues with diaconal students to be more difficult to deal with because of the absence of connexionally agreed learning outcomes for deacons and the detached nature of the diaconal stationing process. Nevertheless for some students there remains a lack of clarity in student oversight as between the local Oversight Committee and the Warden of the Order.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that Queen's should continue to be in conversation with the appropriate bodies in the Methodist Church (in particular the Faith and Order Committee and the Ministries Committee) with the aim of achieving more clarity and better accountability in diaconal formation.

96. The main obstacle to integration, identified by all groups – staff, former and current students and placement supervisors alike – is the sheer 'busyness' of life at Queen's. Despite being frequently encouraged to 'make space', students perceive the timetable as making this impossible. Yet they value the timetable structure which enables them to be full-time without being fully resident because of its helpfulness with domestic circumstances. It is an important factor in the choice of Queen's by Anglican students. Many students, as well as the staff, therefore judge the 'busyness' to be inevitable, something to be coped with, and in itself a realistic preparation for ministry. Institutional measures are intentionally put in place where possible – the long midday break for worship and lunch, the restructuring of the

pastoral theology course. Nevertheless there remains the feeling that time pressure is experienced by students as a detriment and a hurt. One student expressed the view that 'the course forms you for burn-out' – but others vehemently disagreed.

97. Two or three years ago the Queen's student body agreed to change the well-established allotment area from individual plots to a communally-worked area. Although students had readily shared produce under the former system, the new way of working had a remarkable effect not only on the college community but also on the integrative process. It had sound theological foundations: the two staff members responsible for the change brought in one case long and lived familiarity with Benedictine spirituality, and in the other case a research interest in 'conviviality'. The allotment offers any member of the community (resident or not) the opportunity to get their hands dirty, engage with the natural world (feed the chickens), let their mind float free, link with a past left behind (especially for overseas students), share work and produce, socialise and co-operate. These experiences are not only about building community: they are a worked example of the integration of theory and practice and the reciprocal relationship between them. People smile when the allotment is mentioned and at least one reviewer found it an ideal setting for his morning prayers.

<p>The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion H, Practical and pastoral theology.</p>

SECTION FIVE: STAFF AND STUDENTS

Reviewers will consider the recruitment, expertise, resourcing, appraisal and development of staff.

I Teaching staff

- I.i The gender, lay/ordained and denominational balance of ministerial and teaching staff should model appropriate patterns of learning and of ministry and comply with denominational guidelines.*

98. Queens has a very strong staff team of twenty plus contracted full and part time staff. Their CVs demonstrate that they come from a wide range of backgrounds and experience which enables programmes to be offered at the appropriate levels, both in terms of academic achievement and of preparation for public ministry. Throughout the review we were particularly impressed by the breadth and depth of the expertise and knowledge as well as the teaching skills of the staff. This was evidenced by our own observations of the taught sessions and the worship and by feedback from the students. Queens also calls upon a number of visiting speakers to be involved in the delivery of certain sessions within the various programmes.

99. The mix of teaching staff within Queens meets the denominational guidelines in terms of gender, lay/ordained and denominational representation. However the principal himself expressed some concern that the institution currently only has one full time female member of staff who is an ordained Anglican minister. (At the time of the review she was on sick leave) He is looking at ways to increase this number through any future recruitment opportunities.

100. At Shallowford parts of the programmes of Reader and OLM training are delivered by Associate tutors. They are employees of Lichfield diocese and include an Anglican minister, a Reader who is employed as a youth worker and a member of the Diocesan staff team. The Director of Reader and OLM training is also an employee of Lichfield diocese seconded to Queen's. They are appointed to their associate tutor roles jointly by Queen's and the Lichfield diocese which enables the appropriate quality assurance requirements to be fulfilled. A similar arrangement applies to the Worcester Readers' Course. There is a gender balance in the Associate Tutor provision in these courses.

The review team has Confidence in regard to Criterion I, teaching staff.

J All Staff

- J.i Staff recruitment and selection procedures should be transparent, fair and consonant with the policies of the relevant partner bodies.*

101. From a meeting which reviewers had with both academic and ancillary staff it is clear that recruitment and selection procedures conform to current ideas of good

practice in this area. Academic jobs are advertised on appropriate websites as well as, when deemed necessary, in printed church publications. The selection process involves shortlisted candidates teaching a session to a selected group of students, who are then invited to provide feedback to the selection panel, and a formal interview with the panel, which also includes student representation. This is fully consonant with the policies of the relevant partner bodies. Vacancies for ancillary staff are also filled via open recruitment with jobs again being advertised on appropriate websites or in the press. The selection process varies according to the type of job but would always include a panel interview and may involve appropriate skills tests. Queen's also makes use of agencies for the filling of temporary/short term ancillary vacancies, for example maternity leave or ill health covers. Individuals recommended by agencies would still be interviewed by staff at Queen's. There is no written policy on recruitment and selection but all vacancies to be advertised are scrutinised by the Leadership Team to be clear about priorities and to ensure that they comply with current best practice in equality and diversity and other legal requirements. Appointments of associate tutors is outlined in I.i

J.ii *Job descriptions, terms of service and reporting lines should be clear at the time of appointment and reviewed at regular intervals.*

102. All staff at Queens, both academic and ancillary, are provided with job descriptions, and a written contract of employment at their appointment. The latter outlines all the relevant terms and conditions related to the role. On appointment staff are also provided with a copy of the employee handbook. This is currently in the process of being updated and we have seen the first draft of the revised version which includes all the relevant policies and guidelines for staff employed by Queen's as well as information about to whom they should speak in the event of any problems or issues. Some members of staff, both academic and ancillary have dual reporting lines but it is made clear who actually fulfils the 'line management' role and how others to whom the individual reports might be involved in contributing to areas like their staff appraisal. Job descriptions and contracts of employment are reviewed as a matter of course at five yearly intervals although these are also discussed at the annual appraisal to check whether any revisions are needed at that point. Associate Tutors working at Shallowford House have a letter of appointment from Queen's which outlines their role and the terms and conditions under which they operate. In this capacity they report to the Director of Reader and OLM Training. There is one associate tutor delivering training on the Worcester Readers' programme and he operates under the same regime.

J.iii *There should be an effective programme for the continuing professional development of staff, including annual appraisals for all staff.*

103. All staff employed by Queen's have an annual appraisal, including those employed via agencies for longer term cover. For all staff this involves the completion of a series of self assessment questions which vary depending upon individuals' roles, followed by a discussion with the individual's line manager. Others to whom an individual may have some kind of reporting line may be involved in the process in some way. This could vary from providing feedback to the line manager on the member of staff's performance to being present at the discussion as

appropriate. Academic staff are also invited to have an 'accompanist' of their choice, present at their interview to ensure openness and transparency as well providing support and challenge. For all staff the process involves the identification of SMART objectives, where this is relevant to the sort of job involved. The identification of learning and development needs also forms part of the appraisal process. These can vary from essential mandatory training such as food hygiene certification through to three month study leave periods for research and development. For academic staff there is a policy for study leave which entitles a member of staff to a three month sabbatical after every four years of consecutive service. Applications for this would be discussed at the annual appraisal and submitted to the sabbaticals panel for approval. The Principal has expressed some concerns that current staffing levels mean that Queen's is not able to abide by its own policy and some staff are having to take their sabbaticals on a part time basis spread over two terms rather than in a three month block. There are regular staff meetings and once a term this will take the form of a staff development session covering issues such as students with special needs; marking systems etc. Associate tutors are invited to attend these if they are relevant to their role. All academic staff, including associate tutors are involved in a process of peer review of their teaching and associate tutors also take part in an annual review of the Readers' programme and their involvement in it. Associate tutors are aware that they can access relevant learning and development opportunities at Queens.

J.iv *Staff should be sufficient in number and expertise, and resourced to fulfil their role adequately for the institution's and students' needs.*

104. The 2014-18 Business Plan identifies the need for additional staff both academic and administrative, particularly in the Centre for Ministerial Formation, to meet the increasing demands being made on it and to allow academic staff to continue to develop themselves through ongoing research opportunities in order to maintain the high standard of teaching and support which students currently experience. Reviewers were certainly aware of the fact that the administrative staff at Queen's are working under a lot of pressure and should there be any sickness or other problems in this area the systems could break down very quickly. We are also aware that Queen's is in the process of recruiting additional staff to try to address this issue but will need to keep this under review as workloads continue to increase. We were also conscious of issues relating to the current IT/Wifi systems and access to these. Queen's has so far relied on short time contracted help to deal with this but given the additional pressures in terms of numbers of staff and students using the systems, Queen's is currently looking to appoint a dedicated member of staff to this area. Associate tutors at Shallowford House receive their administrative support from Lichfield diocese. We are also aware that the main topic at a recent Leadership Team meeting was about staffing needs and priorities. Some of our recommendations address our perception of particular staffing needs and these are intended to be a constructive contribution to this very important debate, but we do appreciate that only the Leadership Team is in a position to discern the overall pattern of needs and priorities.

105. The new situation in Methodist training is greatly increasing the pastoral load on staff and on the institution. This is manifested particularly in the areas of placement organisation and supervision (30 placements each year) and of oversight. The QCC

requires a separate Oversight Committee with different membership. It will eventually be necessary to hold five committees, each considering twenty reports at a time, at the end of the academic year. The approval of reports by the Oversight Committee is the vital step in assessing students' readiness for stationing.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that Queen's should continue to monitor workloads and takes the necessary steps to appoint additional staff, both academic and ancillary, to ensure that the institution is able to maintain its current high standards of delivery without putting undue pressure on existing staff members.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the Foundation should continue robust conversation with the Sponsoring Churches in respect of staff resources for training and formation.

The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion J, All staff.
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K Students

Reviewers will examine procedures for student admission, welfare and support, appraisal and discipline.

K.i Policies on students' admission, welfare, complaints, discipline, assessment, reporting to sponsoring churches and arrangements for first appointments should be publicly available; and there should be evidence that they are applied.

106. In the first instance the Queens' website provides useful information about admission to the various courses and programmes at Queen's and in discussions with the Principal he was clear that once students have been selected for ministerial training by their sponsoring denomination then their interaction with Queen's is very much about them finding out what the institution can offer them and about identifying the most suitable form of training and agreeing their individual pathway. The students we spoke to concurred with this view and were very positive about the way in which their personal programmes were tailored to take account of their prior learning and experience as well as covering modules essential to their future ministerial roles. Interestingly whilst this was something which the last inspection particularly commented on, it has now become so much part of the DNA of Queens that students almost take it for granted

107. There is a range of student handbooks which provide information on issues such as welfare, health, safety, security, complaints, discipline, assessment etc. These are available on Moodle along with the associated forms. There does appear to be a certain amount of overlap of information provided in these various publications but students themselves seemed clear about how and where to find the

information they need. At the start of their programme of training students are assigned a personal tutor with whom they agree a learning contract. This tutor is their first 'port of call' for any problems or other issues they may have throughout their time at Queen's, academic or personal and is also a major contributor to the student's report.

108. The reviewers met informally with a number of students and also in a more structured way with groups of Anglican and Methodist first and second year students. At these meetings the students spoke very positively about the support they received from their personal tutors. They also commented on the role of the chaplain and how much they valued this role which was seen as confidential and independent. There was some concern expressed amongst students that because of funding this support may not be available in the same way after next September (see D.i).

109. The students we met also spoke very highly of the support which was made available for those with special needs, particularly for those with problems like dyslexia. A number of these students receive individual support and the tutor concerned offers additional classes on study skills and referencing techniques. These are very popular and well attended even by those with an academic background. The first year students, in particular, also highlighted the support within their cell groups and worship groups as being very beneficial. Methodist students also have an 'accompanist' during their time at Queens. This is someone outside the institution but appointed by Queen's as another source of support and all Anglican students and most of the Methodist ones also have a spiritual director.

110. Students were able to describe to us clearly and in some detail the arrangements for first appointments in both denominations. There was a perception that Queen's does well in helping Anglican students find the curacies they want and from the Methodist side the feedback was that Oversight Tutor worked very hard at getting to know the students as individuals and did an excellent job at matching them with the available profiles. She also makes herself available at the time of stationing to provide any support which might be needed and this is very much appreciated.

111. Readers training at Shallowford House were clearly able to describe their selection process which involved undertaking the Bishop's Certificate and the Pathways course and how during the latter they are helped to discern their calling to ministry. If they decide to proceed with Reader ministry they then attend a Diocesan Advisory Panel for selection for training before embarking on the two year programme which is the equivalent of the first year of a university degree. Information for Readers about assessment, support and other relevant policies and guidelines are contained within the Queens' academic handbook and the Lichfield Handbook for Reader Ministry with which they are provided at their induction. Trainee Readers have personal tutors from within the Lichfield diocese and for those who might struggle with the academic nature of the course there is the option to have a 'study buddy'. Some of the personal tutors have experience of and expertise in working with people with conditions like dyslexia and so would provide support as necessary.

K.ii *The institution's decision-making structure should enable students to take an appropriate part in its governance, provided that students take responsibility for their participation.*

112. How Queen's engages with students and how students participate in decision making and are able to give feedback and engage in development matters, is an increasingly complex issue as the number of dispersed students increases. The Foundation regards it as important that:

- All students from across the whole institution are able to give timely feedback and to engage in the process of decision making and development.
- All student voices are heard and that the interests or needs of some do not dominate.
- There is effective student representation on the Governing Body.

Currently students are represented on Academic Board, Programme Groups and the Graduate Research Committee, but this is not comprehensive across the range of dispersed learners. Students are also represented on the new Staff Student Community Forum (see L.iv) and through that body they also send two representatives to the meetings of the Governing Body.

113. The students we met were clear who their representatives were on the Academic Board. The current representatives have taken a number of steps to improve the way in which this representation is carried out. There is now a clear framework in place for ensuring that this role was carried out effectively and meaningfully. This includes a role description and ways of collecting students' opinions and feeding back to them. Lines of communication have not always been clear but a Moodle page is now being set up with all the relevant information about and for student representatives. They have worked closely with a member of Queen's Leadership team in organising this. The Governors' meeting we attended also had student representation and Queen's has a Church of England student representative on the Association of Ordinands and Candidates for Ministry. Some Methodist students were unaware of the existence of the Methodist Student Council which performs a similar function and includes at least one full-time student from Queen's and one from the QCC. However, now that all future Methodist student ministers will train at Queen's the constitution of this body needs to be amended.

Recommendation 11

Now that all future Methodist student ministers will train at Queen's, we recommend that the Principal and the Director of Methodist Formation should ask the Methodist Church to amend the constitution of the Methodist Student Council and make the work of the Council known to all Methodist students.

114. Because of the way in which students are involved in discussions about the issues affecting Queen's the reviewers identified some genuine concern, also expressed by some staff, that in the introduction of Common Awards there might be some reduction in contact time and on flexibility within programmes for future groups of students. The students feel they are well served by the staff at Queen's and value this highly. They would like the Academic Board or some other appropriate academic body to evaluate this change and its effects over the next few years and we endorse this.

115. Readers do not have any direct student representation on any of the bodies associated with the governance of Queens but rely on the personal and course tutors to relay any issues which they might have to the appropriate diocesan or academic bodies.

The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion K, Students.

SECTION SIX: GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

L Organisation and governance

Reviewers will examine the effectiveness of the institution's governance structures and processes.

- L.i *The institution should have clear financial, administrative and management structures and an up-to-date governing document, and the governing body should be constituted in line with it.*

116. "The Queens Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Articles of Association dated 16th June 2011". The Articles state that the objects of Queens are to provide training and education including for ordination as well as the promotion of research. The Governors are responsible for directing "the Foundation's affairs in such a way as to promote the Objects" of the Foundation which includes establishing policies and plans and approving the budget and accounts each year before publications and monitoring performance and acting to ensure the effective management of the Foundation. There is clear guidance within the Articles of Association on the appointment of Governors and their obligations.

117. The work of the Governing Body is outlined in the Articles of Association which were last established in June 2011. The Academic Board has responsibility for the academic standards of the College. Day-to-day responsibility is delegated through the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programme boards. The Finance Committee has responsibility for oversight and management of resources. Day-to-day financial management is carried out by the Director of Finance and Operations supported by one Financial Assistant and an additional Financial Officer, due to start shortly. She also line manages the Administration team which has specific roles in academic administration as well as others providing general administrative support. The Academic Administrator supports the academic staff in all aspects from student registrations through to assessments and liaison with the awarding bodies. A recently appointed academic assistant is responsible for new applicant enquiries. The executive assistant to the Principal and two Centre Administrators complete the Administration team. Most of the team are part-time employees. There is also a small catering and hospitality team.

118. The Leadership Team consisting of the Principal, the Director of Finance and Operations and the three Academic Directors is responsible for oversight of all college academic, financial and operations management. This team provides the primary link between the governing body and all college activities.

- L.ii *There should be evidence that the governing body recognises and discharges its role and legal duties in respect of stewardship of the assets; setting and safeguarding the vision, values and reputation of the institution; operational and staff oversight and support.*

119. As required by the Articles of Association, the Governing Body is chaired by a President who has the responsibility to oversee the delivery of these objects. The body consists of fourteen members of whom ten are co-opted. Currently there are four Methodists, seven Anglicans, one from the URC and one from the New Testament Church of God. It was clear from our attendance at a meeting of the governing body that there is a good rapport between the Principal and the Governors. There is a collective sense of ownership of the vision of the college and an understanding of the direction taken by the college. They are fully supportive of the Principal and his senior team.

120. The Governing Body meets four times a year. The Principal presents a progress report at the meeting which is also attended by the Director of Finance and Operations. The Finance Committee also meets four times a year in advance of the meeting of the Governing Body. In addition to the Principal and the Director of Finance and Operations, this committee also includes four of the Governors who have specific financial or managerial experiences. Thus for example, decisions about spending on capital projects such as the proposed purchase of 24 Somerset Road and the refurbishment of the kitchen and some of the rooms were taken with the knowledge and approval of the Governors. The Governing Body therefore brings appropriate experience to the running of Queen's. Governors also have the opportunity to meet members of academic and other staff and student representatives at their formal meetings. In addition Governors do meet staff informally at meal times and between lectures. The Governors clearly exercise good stewardship over the assets of the college and their management is evidenced by these regular meetings.

L.iii *It should have the mix of skills and experience appropriate to its role; there should be a clear understanding of the respective roles of trustees and staff, with job descriptions for key officers; induction for new trustees; and ongoing training needs should be met.*

121. Governors bring a range of skills to their work. Among the members there is one accountant, a barrister and a solicitor specialising in Family Law. Three others have senior management experience in public services and business experience. In addition, they offer legal and business knowledge which has been particularly valuable in the development of the bid for the property at 24 Somerset Road. The induction programme for new Governors is clear and evidenced by the comments by a newly appointed governor at the Governors' meeting. Governors also meet periodically to review the work of Queen's and their own training needs. They recognise that there could be advantage to having more property expertise within their number.

L.iv *There should be evidence of a structured contribution made by all community members - teaching staff, ancillary staff, the student body and individuals - so that they play an effective role in decision-making.*

122. All permanent teaching staff, whether full-time or part-time, are members of the Staff Committee which meets regularly. One of these meetings each term is focused

on staff development. They contribute to the academic decision making process through the staff meeting as well as the various boards of study and assessment boards. Administrative, hospitality and finance staff report to the Director of Finance and Resources and the Principal. From conversations with staff, it is clear that there is a good working relationship between staff and they are listened to and share the vision of the college. Two students are elected representatives to the Staff Committee and one is a member of the governing body (as described in Kii). The student representatives are very active and there was confidence among the students we met that their views were heard.

123. A new Staff Student Community Forum (SSCF) has been constituted and met for the first time on 5th December and will meet once a term. It reports to the Principal. The SSCF consists of up to twelve students drawn from as wide a range as possible of those who are registered on programmes and courses, those who learn at Queen's and those whose learning is dispersed; up to two partners of students; up to five academic/administrative staff members (including the Hospitality Officer) and the Chaplain. The SSCF is intended to be a primary place for staff and students to take counsel together about key issues affecting the life of the Foundation. It will gather comprehensive feedback from the student body on the overall 'student experience' at Queen's using online surveys, normally twice yearly. The Forum will reflect on this feedback, identifying issues and making recommendations for changes and developments that will improve this experience. The Forum maintains a Moodle presence to enable student issues to be raised and discussed in between meetings. Recommendations and minutes of meetings will be posted on Moodle as a primary way of reporting back to the student body. The student members of the SSCF select two students to represent the student body at meetings of the Governors of Queen's. The students will be invited by the Chair of Governors to speak to the Forum's work in relation to the recommendations and minutes, and to represent a student perspective on other matters before the Governors. In addition Governors may remit to the SSCF specific consultation exercises, for example on policy reviews.

L.v *The institution's audited annual reports should be produced in good time and filed with the Charity Commission/Companies House as appropriate.*

124. The accounts are prepared and audited by independent Chartered Accountants annually. As Queen's is registered with both Companies House and the Charity Commissioners, audited annual reports are submitted to both and where produced by the required time.

<p>The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion L Organisation and governance.</p>
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M Business planning and risk management

Reviewers will look at evidence for the existence and implementation of the institution's strategic policies.

M.i There should be a regularly-updated long-term strategy document agreed by the trustees and, in line with it, a business plan covering 3-5 years which identifies short and medium term aims and objectives and identifies how the institution intends to meet them.

125. A Business Plan for the period 2014 – 2018 has been provisionally approved by the governing body. Following a period of change, the focus is for long-term sustainability. Aided by the decision of the Methodist Church to make Queen's its centre for ministerial formation, supported by a Memorandum of Understanding, ambitious plans have been put in place for investment in facilities and growth in income. As described in para 20, Queen's is looking to develop its future profile through four new main 'centres' – Ministerial Formation, Research, Discipleship and Theology and Professional Development. These four 'centres' together with the related academic and administrative staff working collegially and collaboratively would be allocated resources for which each 'centre' would be accountable. The 'centres' would provide the focus of interconnected and interdependent activities enhanced by the Foundation's commitment to Global Christianity and Black and Asian Theologies. The work currently undertaken by the Centres for Black Ministries and Leadership and Global Christianity needs more external funding, but their values, priorities and commitments permeate the whole Foundation and their work is operative across each of the main centres and is seen as essential to the vision of Queen's. The Centre for Black Ministries and Leadership is currently funded by the Archbishops' Council until September 2014. The Church of England has indicated it cannot provide further funds. A professional fund raiser was unable to secure additional funding from Trusts and donors. The Methodist Church has not yet agreed how world church matters will be embedded in the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network, or what part Queen's will play in that. There is disagreement about the extent to which SALT scholarships will be used to support students from the Global South studying in the UK. In 2012-13 and 2013-14 Queen's has received interim funding to sustain programmes but a stable income stream for MA students needs to be agreed for 2014 onward. With these uncertainties in mind we feel we must make a recommendation for an assessment of the future viability of the work currently undertaken in these two Centres.

Recommendation 12

Since plans to maintain the work of the Centre for Black Ministries and Leadership and the focus on Global Christianity are considered to be key contributions to the future of Queen's, we recommend that the Principal and the Governors should establish a feasibility study on their viability in the 2014-2018 Business Plan.

M. ii *Annual budgets should be prepared in line with the business plan.*

126. The annual report and financial statement for the year ended 31 August 2013 was audited and approved by the governing body. Reports for the previous three years were also viewed as was the annual budget for 2013/2014. The annual budget is prepared through the Finance Committee and presented to the Board of Governors for approval. The draft 2014-2018 Business Plan which commences in September 2014 contains a review of the previous five year business strategy. In this, reference is made to the planned upgrade of the campus facilities including accommodation, teaching and administrative facilities. Reference is also made to the achievement of growth in income through the recruitment of self-funded students and research students. Having given provisional approval to the draft Plan and the suggested changes to the structure of the Foundation the Plan will be finalised to include the financial details.

M.iii *There should be an effective risk assessment, review and management process, which should include physical (e.g. health & safety and fire), financial, business and reputational risks.*

127. There are policies in place to cover risks in various areas such as Health and Safety (including Fire), Data protection, Harassment and bullying, Equal opportunities, Safeguarding (of children) and Student complaints. In all areas with the exception of the Health and Safety and Fire policy, policies appear detailed and effective. A schedule of revisions and developments is summarised in an action chart.

128. The area of Health & Safety is currently managed by an external organisation and although there is a Health and Safety Officer within the college, it was acknowledged that the management and review process is passive. This leaves Queen's vulnerable, particularly as the number of students has increased, and as conferences and other events involving day visitors increase, and so needs to be addressed. It is for this reason alone that we have a qualification on our statement of confidence in the area of risk management.

129. There is a Risk Register covering financial, business and reputational risks. The Governors do state that they have a risk management strategy that annually reviews risks, establishes systems and procedures to mitigate risks identified and implements procedures to minimise the potential impact on Queen's should the risks materialise. Having seen the Risk Register, we can confirm that this is done.

Recommendation 13

We recommend that the Leadership Team review the role of its Health and Safety Officer, maintain a Risk Register solely for Health and Safety issues including fire risks, and regularly reviews the risks and monitors the actions implemented to minimise such risks. Risk assessments need to be carried out in particular in the area of fire safety.

The review team has Confidence with Qualifications with regard to Criterion M, Business planning and risk management.
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N Financial policies

Reviewers will consider the effectiveness of day-to-day operating processes:

N.i *The institution should have policies to control and manage investments, expenditure and borrowing, and the annual report and accounts should contain an appropriate reserves policy.*

130. Audited accounts have been provided for each of the financial years from 2009-10 to 2012-13. During 2012-13, significant changes were put in place to tighten up controls on the financial management of the institution. The financial health is now monitored by the Finance Committee which consists of four governors, the Director of Finance and Operations and the Principal.

131. The Finance Committee reports directly to the Governors who acknowledge their responsibilities under company law to apply accounting policies appropriate to the charitable status of Queen's and make judgements and estimates that are "reasonable and prudent". Independent Auditors confirm that the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 are being met. The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting show that there is a good understanding of the financial processes and that the Director of Finance and Operations is adequately supported by the Governors.

132. Queen's does have a reserves policy. As stated in the Annual Report 2012-13, the Governors aimed to build up the unrestricted reserves to a value equal to twelve months operating costs for the institution. This was achieved in 2013.

N.ii *Management accounts showing performance against budget should be produced at least quarterly and reviewed regularly by the trustees.*

133. Management accounts are produced and presented to the Finance Committee acting for the Governing Body at their quarterly meetings. At the meeting of the Governing Body that we attended, there was a clear expression of confidence in the performance against budget. This was not surprising as four Governors, including the President, serve on the Finance Committee.

N.iii *The institution should consider its sources of income and have strategies to identify and raise the funds it needs.*

134. With the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Methodist Church in 2013, Queen's are guaranteed a significant part of their income stream. That part of this income stream related to initial Methodist formation and training has been earmarked up until 2015/2016 (and is similar in level per capita) to that provided by the Church of England) but there is as yet less clarity on some of the income to support the wider aspects of the Learning Network that involves Queen's or the expertise of Queen's staff. The remainder of Queen's income comes primarily from Anglican formational students and independent students. The recent inclusion of Reader training for the Lichfield and Worcester Diocese will also have increased the income stream. Further income is derived from investments and grants. Investment values rose very significantly during 2012-13 as their valuation improved.

135. Overall, a very small surplus was generated for the year. The contribution to meet expenditure, from investment income and grants and donations was much larger than in previous years. This was to meet the refurbishments costs which had been planned under the 2007-12 Business Strategy. However, there is a concern that the total fee revenue from students may not be sufficient by itself to meet the expenditure associated with running the programmes. While investment income serves as a healthy cushion, this should be used for improving the fabric of the college and to develop the long-term vision of Queen's. In the short-term, there should be a review of the financial costs and funding of students for ministerial formation (See also Para.27 and recommendation 2). The review should also include an internal assessment of the nature of costs of delivery of existing programmes. As the Common Awards programme is delivered from 2014-2015 at different institutions, there may also be an opportunity to observe different patterns of delivery and gain some insights into possible efficiency gains.

Recommendation 14

We recommend that a) Queen's should work with the Sponsoring Churches for a better understanding of the full economic cost of the delivery of formational training while also seeking to make economies of scale and b) Queen's should also strive to work with other colleges in the Durham University Common Awards partnership to better understand the cost of delivery of the new accredited courses.

136. New initiatives outlined in Section A.iii will all impact on the future financial stability of Queen's. The Foundation has plans to further increase income from conferences and other events. However the most significant factor will be student recruitment onto accredited programmes. Hence the future success in recruiting Anglican and other candidates as well as Methodists onto the Common Awards programmes will be critical. The recent refurbishment of the estate and the plan to extend the accommodation should help to attract more students and improve income.

137. We have commented elsewhere on the support we would give to the clear establishment of a 'Centre for Professional Development' but equally we believe this will need staff effort in persuading the sponsoring and other churches to encourage serving ministers to look to Queen's for their professional development. In addition Queen's has shown boldness and imagination in its conversations with overseas partners, in particular now with the Free University of Amsterdam. The Foundation is fully aware that it needs to continue to grow its reputation and relevance globally and desires in particular to commit itself to the southern hemisphere. Equally, the development of online materials provides opportunities to reach a wider student population. There is potential for growth in numbers and income through these initiatives. To maximise the potential of all these developments, Queen's would benefit from reviewing and improving its promotion and recruitment.

Recommendation 15

Given the new Business Plan, Queen's needs to attract Anglican students for initial ministerial formation, independent and international students, serving

ministers for professional development and resources to continue the commitment to the global south, and we recommend that there should be a review of the promotion and recruitment strategy and that consideration should be given to either the allocation of further staff resource or the commissioning of a study to further promote the Foundation.

138. It is because of our concern over the clarity of a primary source of income and the work still to be done in promotion and recruitment that we have qualified our statement of confidence in relation to Financial Policies.

N.iv *The institution should have adequate financial controls aimed at minimising waste and loss, and should be appropriately advised on tax-efficiency.*

139. The Finance Committee seems to exercise a good degree of prudence in releasing investment income. Investments are managed by an independent company. There is regular contact with CCLA and this is reported at the Finance Committee. The Risk Register acknowledges the risks involved in investments and mitigates the risk by using a “wide spread/low risk” approach to investment that is also ethical using a CBF fund that is professionally managed. The investment policy is reviewed annually by the Finance Committee and therefore the Governors.

The review team has Confidence with Qualifications with regard to Criterion N, Financial policies.

O Statutory and operating policies

O.i *Proper books of account should be kept, with computerised data regularly backed up and stored offsite.*

140. Proper books of accounts are kept and this is recorded and managed using modern software and backed up. Records are stored off site with the auditors.

O.ii *Bank mandates should be up to date, with appropriate authority levels.*

141. Bank mandates are up to date and managed efficiently by the Director of Finance and Operations with the able support of the Finance Committee. The level of authority of signatories is monitored by the Finance Committee.

The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion O, Statutory and operating policies.

P Accommodation

P.i *The i) public, ii) teaching and iii) provided private living accommodation should be fit for purpose and suited to students' needs.*

142. Queen's main accommodation is housed in the Queen's campus which is held on a lease from the Calthorpe Estates until 2062. The 2014-18 Business Plan lists the many improvements which have been made to the site between 2006 and 2011, mainly since the last inspection. (See A.iii). The residential accommodation on the Queen's campus is comfortable and meets student requirements and although not all of it is yet en-suite the on-going programme of improvements will serve to address this situation. The teaching accommodation, which consists of four large lecture rooms and a number of smaller breakout and seminar rooms, is fit for purpose. The rooms have recently been fitted with new audio visual facilities and have been refurnished. The public spaces meet the needs of the majority of the students however there is an issue with the main reception area which does not provide adequate access for those with disabilities, particularly those with mobility problems (see P ii). The reviewers noted that security is treated as a priority at Queen's with buildings being accessed by key pads, the use of swipe cards in some buildings and secure key locks on all bedrooms.

143. There is currently not enough residential accommodation on the Queen's campus and so a cohort of 16 of the weekday students is currently housed in en suite rooms in Victoria Halls in Selly Oak. This accommodation is a 20 minute walk from the main campus and so whilst the actual accommodation itself is well up to standard its location is not ideal. It should be noted that the students using this accommodation to whom we spoke expressed no concerns and have formed their own 'mini community' celebrating compline together each evening when they are in residence. Queen's is well aware of the problems created by this shortage of residential accommodation and has been exploring a range of different options to address it. The current preferred solution involves Queen's in making a bid to purchase a neighbouring property which would provide additional residential and teaching accommodation. Should this bid not be accepted, there are contingency plans based around developing land within the existing campus. An urgent priority is for campus development that must provide the following key objectives:

- A further 30 study bedrooms which are needed both for full-time students and to accommodate students from both the Queen's Connexional Course and the Queen's Regional Course for shared residential events.
- Ground floor bedrooms (or lift access to upper floor accommodation) for Disability Discrimination Act requirements.
- A large teaching classroom (40-50).
- Dedicated study space for daily commuters and others who use the campus on a non-residential basis.
- An improved reception which is not on an upper floor.
- Recreational facilities.

It was hoped that decisions would be made in March 2014 about an agreed project and its funding between Governors and the Methodist Church. However, there was no update on this before we submitted our report.

144. Queen's also makes use of Shallowford House, a retreat house belonging to the Diocese of Lichfield. Teaching takes place here one night a week and it is also used for termly residential weekends each year for trainee Readers from the Lichfield Diocese. The accommodation here is very good with well equipped teaching rooms and plenty of breakout spaces and students obviously enjoy the time they spend here.

P.ii *There should be adequate provision for the needs of disabled students.*

145. As well as the programme of improvements noted in A iii, Queens is also part way through an improvement plan to improve disabled access around the campus. Whilst no buildings have lifts, all the teaching rooms are on the ground floor and although some of the seminar rooms are on the first floor, there are enough located at ground floor level for this not to create problems. The main teaching rooms have been equipped with hearing loop systems and there is ramped access to all the buildings which need this. There are also a number of accessible toilets around the campus. One of the flats has been fitted out for the use of any student with mobility problems and this was used by a student who uses both a wheelchair and a mobility scooter, during the first weekend of our review. Another student who uses a wheeled walking aid attended the course on a daily basis. Both expressed themselves happy with the provisions made and with the support received from staff and students.

146. The library and the common room are fully accessible, the dining room has access via French doors and further improvements are planned here within the next few months. The main reception area is located in the same building as the dining area and is on the first floor up two sets of stairs with no alternative access available. Queen's is aware of this issue and has plans in place to address it as a matter of urgency. The current accommodation at Victoria Halls would not be suitable for students with mobility problems as the block used has no ground floor bedrooms. The Methodist Church has recently agreed to bid for a neighbouring residential property which would enable Queen's to create a 30 bed facility with additional teaching space that is urgently needed. If this purchase is not successful plans are being developed to build on the campus. In whichever case a new ground floor reception area is planned for development in 2014, subject to planning consents. The goal in the Business Plan is by 2015 to have a campus which is more accessible to those with disabilities, and with the residential and teaching facilities that are needed to enable Queen's to carry out its work efficiently.

147. Shallowford House has undergone a number of modifications to improve access for those with disabilities, including the installation of ramps. There are ground floor bedrooms available and the teaching rooms are accessible and have hearing loops fitted. There are some parts of the building where entrance to the rooms involves small steps. However, where this involved the main teaching rooms, alternative access was available and there are enough alternative breakout spaces which are fully accessible to mean that this is unlikely to cause problems. The bar area is located in the basement down a flight of stairs but alternative arrangements could be made if necessary by using one of the other areas as a social area.

The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion P, Accommodation.
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CONCLUSION

We have been touched and greatly impressed by our engagement with the learning community that is the Queen's Foundation. It has been a privilege to be able, for a short time, to be alongside the excitement and challenges of that part of the community that is forming people for ministry. The commitment of all the staff, academic and administrative, the full engagement of the students with the opportunities and resources of the Foundation and the professional gifts of the Governors have given us an insight into the stream of talent being formed for the future of our churches. There is still more change to come and to be managed, an increasing number of essential partnerships to grow and sustain, additional resources still to be found but it is our strong hope that those who read this report will be inspired, as we have been, to desire to be champions of the role that Queen's is fulfilling and plans to fulfil for the future discipleship, mission and ministry of our churches.

Overall outcome: The review team has Confidence in The Queen's Foundation for preparing candidates for ordained and licensed ministry.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the Principal and the Governors continue their discussions with Sponsoring Churches and with Durham University to investigate whether and when a move to a more coordinated pattern of annual and periodic institutional reviews would be practical, efficient and prudent.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the Principal and the Governors consider funding a level of dedicated staff support to the institutional planning function to support decision making on priorities and allocating resources as the Foundation grows and increases its range of activity.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the proposed renewal of links with Oscott should be vigorously pursued.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that in view of the importance and complexities of the range of institutional collaboration the Principal and the Leadership Team should consider allocating a dedicated member of staff to assist them on managing/overseeing partnership arrangements a) to ease the pressure on the Leadership Team, b) to promote and encourage more effective partnership arrangements and c) to keep them under review and ensure that they are working effectively.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that Queen's should pursue the aspiration to develop a robust chaplaincy team with a wider remit. This might suitably be combined with a role in the teaching of, and research into, chaplaincy.

Recommendation 6

In view of the concentration of Methodist ministerial training at Queen's, we recommend that the Foundation should ask the Methodist Church to review its policies and strategies for preparing student presbyters and deacons to enter into 'a covenant relationship ... in which they are held accountable by the Church in respect of their ... Christian discipleship' in personal and spiritual as well as functional terms. (SOs 700 (2), 701 (2))

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the Principal and the Governors consider funding a level of dedicated staff support to the ICT function as the Foundation grows and

increases its reliance on such professional expertise for its academic and administrative efficiency.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that Queen's should continue to be in conversation with the appropriate bodies in the Methodist Church (in particular the Faith and Order Committee and the Ministries Committee) with the aim of achieving more clarity and better accountability in diaconal formation.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that Queen's should continue to monitor workloads and takes the necessary steps to appoint additional staff, both academic and ancillary, to ensure that the institution is able to maintain its current high standards of delivery without putting undue pressure on existing staff members.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the Foundation should continue robust conversation with the Sponsoring Churches in respect of staff resources for training and formation.

Recommendation 11

Now that all future Methodist student ministers will train at Queen's, we recommend that the Principal and the Director of Methodist Formation should ask the Methodist Church to amend the constitution of the Methodist Student Council and make the work of the Council known to all Methodist students.

Recommendation 12

Since plans to maintain the work of the Centre for Black Ministries and Leadership and the focus on Global Christianity are considered to be key contributions to the future of Queen's, we recommend that the Principal and the Governors should establish a feasibility study on their viability in the 2014-2018 Business Plan.

Recommendation 13

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We recommend that a) Queen's should work with the Sponsoring Churches for a better understanding of the full economic cost of the delivery of formational

training while also seeking to make economies of scale, and b) Queen's should also strive to work with other colleges in the Durham University Common Awards partnership to better understand the cost of delivery of the new accredited courses.

Recommendation 15

Given the new Business Plan, Queen's needs to attract Anglican students for initial ministerial formation, independent and international students, serving ministers for professional development and resources to continue the commitment to the global south, and we recommend that there should be a review of the promotion and recruitment strategy and that consideration should be given to either the allocation of further staff resource or the commissioning of a study to further promote the Foundation.